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THE

ESSENTIAL FAITH

OF

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH;

DEDUCED FROM

THE SACRED RECORDS.

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BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.

'Nulli præclusa religio est; omnibus patet, omnes admittit, omnes invitat; non eligit domum, nec censum; nudo homine contenta est.'

BOSTON,
LEONARD C. BOWLES.
1833.

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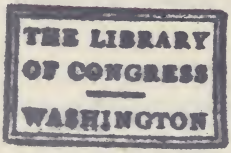

Minot Pratt,——Printer.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In March 1830 the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association offered 'a premium for three tracts, to be approved by them, the object of which should be the introduction and promotion of Christian Unitarianism among the Roman Catholics, the Jews, and the Mahommedans respectively.' Each of the Essays was to be sent to the Committee with the name of the writer in a sealed note, which would be opened only after the decision in favor of the successful candidate. Miss Martineau obtained the three prizes. The celebrity which she has acquired in this country by those of her works which have been reprinted here has induced the belief that these Essays would be read with interest, although if they had come from an unknown author the nature of the subjects might

prevent their general circulation. The ability, the tact, and the fine spirit which they display must increase the admiration of Miss Martineau's talents which already prevails among us. For grasp and vigor of thought, for a rich and felicitous style of expression, and for general power of argument, without the slightest mixture of asperity or unfairness, they will bear comparison with almost any writings of the same class. The author has judiciously adopted a different method of treating each subject, and may therefore expect that opinions will be various about the comparative merits of the three Essays, according to the intellectual habits or tastes of readers. But no one can fail to pronounce them all remarkable productions.

The Essay addressed to the Catholics was first published. It is therefore now first reprinted, and will be followed immediately by those written for the Jews and the Mahommedans. E. S. G.

Boston, May 1st, 1833.

PRELIMINARY ADDRESS.

As Christians addressing Christians, we, whose faith is called Unitarianism, invite you, our Roman Catholic brethren, to join with us in investigating the origin and true nature of that Gospel which we agree in believing worthy of the deepest study, the most unremitting interest, and the highest regard. We agree in believing every Christian to be bound to promote the welfare of his race to the utmost of his ability; and that that welfare is best promoted by the extensive spread and firm establishment of Divine truth. We agree in believing that all other gifts which the Father of men has showered on human kind are insignificant in comparison with the dispensation of grace: or rather, that their value is unrecognised till interpreted by it. We alike feel

that the material frame of the universe, fair as it is, is but as a silent picture till a living beauty is breathed into it, and a divine harmony evolved from it by its being made the exponent of God's purposes of grace. We alike feel that the round of life is dull and tame, and its vicissitudes wearisome and irritating, till it becomes clear that they are preparative to a higher state. We alike feel that worldly pursuits, and even intellectual employments, are objectless and uninteresting, till they can be referred to purposes whose complete fulfilment must take place beyond the grave. We alike feel how pervading, how perpetual is the influence of Gospel principles in ennobling every incident, in hallowing every vicissitude of life; in equalizing human emotions; in animating the sympathies, in vivifying the enjoyments, and blunting the sorrows, of all who adopt those principles in full conviction of the understanding, and in perfect sincerity of heart. We agree in feeling how the whole aspect of existence changes, as the power and beauty of the Gospel become more influential;—as we learn where to deposit our cares, where to fix our hope, what to prize as a real possession, and what to regard as but

loss in comparison of our inestimable gain. We feel in common how endurance may become a privilege, and earthly humiliation our highest honor, when sustained in the spirit, and incurred for the sake, of the Gospel. Feeling thus alike respecting the value of a common possession, desiring in common that all our race should be partakers of it, making it the most earnest of our prayers that we may receive it in its purity and employ it righteously, why should we not help one another to apprehend it and hold it firmly? We know, from the records of history, how the adherents of your faith have so prized it as to sacrifice all things for it; how Catholic confessors have borne long and painful testimony, and how Catholic martyrs have triumphantly sustained the last proof of the strength of their convictions. We can refer you to similar examples among those who believed as we believe; and neither you nor we can doubt, that should occasions of self-sacrifice again arise, every true Christian in your body and in ours would show once more what the Gospel can do in divesting the world of its allurements and death of its terrors. Why then should we not congratulate each other on our common hope? Having

laid hold on the same anchor of the soul, why should we not rejoice in each other's strength? And, differing as we do in the mode of holding a common privilege, why should we not reason together to ascertain where the difference lies, whence it arose, and by what means it may be obviated? Though you and we may not regard variations in Christian faith with an equal degree of regret and dread, we yield not to you or to any on earth in our appreciation of the value of truth, and in our desire that it may become the common possession of our race. Therefore it is that we now propose to you an investigation into its principles; and therefore it is that we seek the removal of all impediments to our joining in hand as we already do in heart, in bringing those who are astray to the fold of the true Shepherd.

The same means of ascertaining Divine truth are in your hands and in ours, if, as your best writers declare and as we believe, you have free access to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Our versions of those Scriptures are, it is true, not exactly alike. It appears to us that yours are, in various minor, and in some considerable points, less correct than our own: but fair investigation will settle

this difference as well as others; and if not, such variations constitute no insurmountable hindrance. The essential truth of the Gospel is not involved in any or all of those modes of expression in which our respective versions of the Scriptures differ. The difficulties which are thus originated are of very inferior moment to those by which our separation is perpetuated, and which depend on our application of the spirit rather than our interpretation of the letter of the sacred records. When we can as perfectly agree in our opinions concerning the person of Christ, as we do in our veneration and gratitude for his holiness and love; when we shall mutually rejoice in the universality as well as in the blessedness of the salvation he brought, we shall not dispute respecting the letter of some of his instructions, or long lament the difficulty of reconciling some apparent discrepancies. If, as you declare, the Scriptures are in common use among you, they must be allowed to be the rule of your faith as well as of your practice; they must be intended for your instruction as well as your confirmation; they must supply subjects of thought as well as of feeling. Do us the justice then, thus to use them as often as you hear us appeal

to them. Compare our interpretation of the Gospel with the records themselves. Compare our deductions from facts with the original statement of those facts, and with all which throws light on them from the history, the discourses, the epistles which follow. To whatever common ground there is between us, let us repair; and since that common ground is the very spot where the living waters first sprang up, there can be no doubt but that a patient search will bring vital refreshment to us all.

We know, brethren, that our mode of belief appears to you under the greatest possible disadvantage, as being, even more than Protestant religion generally, divested of the claims and graces of antiquity. You regard our sect as newly formed from the dispersed elements of other sects which have melted away. You find no mention of our heresy in the records of the middle ages, or only such hints of the doctrines now held by Unitarians as might serve as suggestions of our present opinions: and you therefore naturally conclude that the parts of our faith to which you object are but of yesterday, and consequently the impious inventions of men. If it were so, our present address would indeed be indefensible; our challenge to

investigation would be an insult; our appeal to the Scriptures would be blasphemy. But to shake your conviction of this assumed fact, to convince you if possible that the reverse is the fact, is the object of the exposition of our opinions which we now present to you, and of every effort to explain and defend our faith. It is because we believe our religion to be primitive Christianity that we are attached to it as other Christians are to theirs. It is because we feel that we can carry back our opinions to a remoter antiquity than other Churches, that we prefer them; and though they were completely hidden under the unauthorized institutions of the middle ages, we find no difficulty in establishing their identity with those which were diffused by the messengers and under the sanction of God. He who sees a stream gushing forth from the cave, and can trace it back no further than the darkness whence it issues, may reasonably conclude that he stands near its source; but there may be a wayfarer who by observation and experience knows and can attest that this is no subsidiary spring, but the reappearance of a hidden stream, whose source is hallowed and whose current is inexhaustible. We only ask you to listen to our evidence of

this, and to admit it or not, as you shall be afterwards disposed.

We agree with you in your reverence for antiquity in respect of the faith; and desire nothing more than that by their comparative claims to antiquity our respective religions should be judged. We feel that grace as well as authority is conferred by every evidence of long duration. We can enter into your reverence for your doctrines, because they were held by Saints in cloisters which have crumbled to dust, by heroes and anchorites whose arms were the relics of centuries gone by, or whose rocky abodes have retained their sanctity for a thousand years. We can understand your emotions on receiving sacraments or witnessing ceremonies which fostered the devotion of the saintly and the heroic of the olden time, and which filled the Christian temples abroad with music and fragrance, while in our land the smoke of Druidical sacrifices was ascending offensively to Heaven. But we thus sympathise because we too refer our worship to ancient days. Our hearts also thrill under the impulses which are propagated from afar. We also delight in spiritual exercises, because they are sanctified by long-tried efficacy; and

enjoy our devotion more, because the same hopes exhilarated, the same trust supported our spiritual kindred of the remotest Christian antiquity. In our Churches we believe we feel the spirit of brotherhood which first gave to the believers one heart and one soul. In the silence of our chambers, or amidst the solitudes of nature, we are open to the same incentives to prayer and praise which visited Peter on the house-top, and Paul amidst the perils of the sea. When intent upon the words of life, we, like the Apostle, are impelled to exclaim, 'O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' And were the times of persecution to recur, we doubt not but that, at the very stake, the consciousness of fellowship with the holy Stephen would add vigor to our courage and splendor to our hopes. We refuse to perpetuate the imposing ritual of the early ages because it is not antique enough: but whenever we behold two or three gathered together to worship with the heart and voice alone; when we see men assembling on the first day of the week to break bread in remembrance of Christ, in the simplicity of the primitive ordinance; when we see teachers, in all external things like their brethren, gathering wisdom

from the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field,—we could almost forget the lapse of ages in sympathy with those from whom they separate us.

Such a sympathy, if originated here, will be perfected hereafter; for it is too purely spiritual to be dissolved by death. It will then be also extended to all in whom the spirit of the Gospel is a vivifying principle; as it would be here, if we could throw off our prejudices and see each other as we are. If it is to be, why should it not already be? With the Gospel before us, with some portion of its light beaming on each of us, some measure of its kindly warmth glowing within us, why should we turn away coldly and silently from communion respecting our best treasure?

If either body believe their brethren in error, is it right to leave them so without an effort to reclaim them? If both believe the truth destined to prevail, is it not incumbent on them to assist that prevalence? We believe it is; and therefore we address you; mingling with our entreaties for your co-operation in the development of Divine truth earnest prayers that the Father will abundantly administer to all the resources of that intellectual power and Christian love which constitute a sound mind.

THE ESSENTIAL FAITH OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.

The primitive Christian Church, gathered together in Jerusalem by the command of Christ, and sanctified by the descent of the Holy Spirit, consisted exclusively of Jews. The three thousand who were baptized on that memorable occasion, the numbers which were daily added to the Church, the multitude who were converted to Christianity during the next fifteen years, were all Jews. In some cases, the process of conversion was probably gradual; but in many, we know it was sudden, being caused by the immediate and irresistible evidence of miracles. The change of conviction which it was necessary to work in converting a Jew, was of a nature which could be effected

speedily and completely by the display of one miraculous testimony. It was not a change in all, or any of his views of Deity and Providence. He was not required to relinquish a single article of religious belief which he had previously held under a divine sanction. The fundamental doctrine of the Jewish religion,—the strict Unity of Jehovah,—he was authorized to retain. He was confirmed in his dependence on all that the Prophets had spoken, in his conceptions of the Divine attributes, and in his trust in Divine Providence. The only question on which depended his adhering to the Old, or embracing the New Dispensation, was, whether Jesus of Nazareth was or was not the promised Messiah. As the Jews were bound by the requisitions of their own law (Deut. xviii. 19) to receive implicitly whatever should be taught in God's name by a divinely authorized prophet, their reception of the doctrines of Christianity was a sure consequence of their acknowledgement of the Messiah; and that their acknowledgement of Jesus in that character was the only thing essential to make them Christians we have consistent and abundant evidence in the whole Scripture history. In the preaching of the Apostles to the people of their own nation, we find no intimations of any needful

change in their conceptions of God, and of his mode of government. On the contrary, it was because the Jews were already prepared for their reception of Christianity by their belief in the Unity of God and the consistency of his moral government, that they were the most immediately and the most easily incorporated with the Christian church. For proof of this, we refer to the whole of the discourse delivered by the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, and to every other discourse addressed by the Apostles to Jewish hearers.

The first Gentiles who were converted to Christianity were not worshipers of a plurality of Gods; but men who from intercourse with Jews, or from other opportunities of spiritual advancement, had attained to the belief of One God, indivisible in his nature and unrivalled in his supremacy. The same mode of teaching which sufficed for the Jews, sufficed for them also, as far as the essential truth of Christianity was concerned; and the same method was therefore adopted, as may be seen in the discourse of Peter in the house of Cornelius.

The next converts were from the disciples of the Pagan theology of Greece and Rome. with them a different method of instruction was

needed. Till they knew something of the Divine nature, it was useless to open to them the Divine dispensations. The discourse of Paul at Athens did not therefore begin with anouncing the Saviour: if it had, his inquisitive hearers would perhaps have inquired whether this messenger was sent by Jupiter himself, or whether he was a deputy of some of the inferior gods. The Apostle named not the name of Christ till he had taught the fundamental doctrine—that Jehovah is not only supreme, but sole; that all infinite attributes are centered in him; that all dispensations proceed from him; not only those of nature, by which the human race is created and preserved; but—the way being now prepared for the annunciation—that of grace, by which the world is to be redeemed through him whom God had ordained to be a Prince and a Saviour.

The heathen converts of the latter class had much more to learn, before they could become confirmed Christians, than their more enlightened brethren who had been prepared by intercourse with Jews. They were equally ready in admitting the evidence of miracles, but not equally clear as to the object for which those miracles were wrought. When Paul

and Barnabas restored the cripple at Lystra, the priests and people could scarcely be restrained from offering sacrifice to them as gods, even after the Apostles had explained to them the true nature of Deity. Yet the true religion, being patiently and faithfully taught, was, at length, fully understood and received; and the three classes of converts, Jews, proselytes, and pagans, were made one in Christ; holding, in undisturbed harmony of conviction, the essential doctrines of the strict Unity of Jehovah, the divine authority of Jesus Christ, and consequently, the divine origin of the Gospel he brought.

This unity of the faith seems to have been first broken in upon by the introduction of a fourth class of converts, who, by incorporating their former philosophical doctrines with the new theology they had embraced, originated the first heresy. There had been disputes, it is true, in the church; but not concerning matters of faith. In these disputes the Apostles themselves had been not only involved, but actually opposed to each other. These questions related to the fancied necessity of the adoption by the Gentiles of the forms of the Jewish law: questions of great

importance to the Jews, as affecting their views of the ultimate design of Christianity; to the Gentiles, as involving their spiritual liberties; and to us and the Christian world at large, as throwing light on the transactions of the primitive times, and as having originated some of the Epistles of Paul.

But they bore no relation to the essential doctrines, which were held free from corruption, controversy, or even doubt, till some converts from the philosophical sect of the Gnostics introduced, within twenty years after the death of Christ, the first taint of that corruption from which the true faith has never since been freed.

The fundamental doctrine of the Gnostic philosophy was, that all mind is ultimately derived from the Supreme mind; that the souls of all men have therefore pre-existed; that there is a higher order of spirits, more immediately emanating from the Supreme; that these superior intelligences descend occasionally to inhabit the bodies of men, or to assume their apparent form. This doctrine, to which they were much attached, the Gnostic converts easily contrived to connect with their new theology, believing Jesus to be one

of these superior intelligences in a visible form, or that the man Jesus was animated by such a spirit, who was in reality the Christ. Against this corruption of the simplicity of the faith the Apostle John protested in his First and Second Epistles, in which he followed the example of Peter, Paul, and Jude. That the Gnostics were the persons he had in view, is evident from the fact that no other schismatics at that period troubled the peace of the church, and also from his own application of his censure to such as 'confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.' (2 John 7.) The 'fables and endless genealogies' which Paul reprobates (1 Tim. i. 4.) had the same origin; and the practices to which they led, of 'forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,' are condemned by him as the work of 'seducing spirits.' Of the same class were the 'false teachers,' accused by Peter of bringing in fatal heresies, 'by reason of whom the ways of truth shall be evil spoken of.' All the opinions and practices denounced by Jude, were either publicly maintained by the Gnostics, or generally ascribed to them.

In order to disprove the truth of this representation, it will be necessary to show who be-

sides the Gnostics denied that the man Jesus was the true Christ; who besides the Gnostics propounded fables, originated schisms, and were addicted to superstitious practices, at the times in which the Apostles wrote. This, we conceive, cannot be done.

That the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ must have been new and strange to the faithful teachers of the church we know, not only from their own intimation that it was so, but from the positive proof which the Scriptures afford of the absence of all preparation for it. The preaching of John the Baptist, and the conduct and discourses of Jesus were such as to give his disciples the idea of his being truly and entirely man; divine indeed in his derived power and spiritual perfection, but human in his nature. His disciples accordingly testified in their words and actions that they had no thought of his being any thing else. They received him as their Messiah; but in all besides they remained Jews, ascribing to God alone all divine attributes, worshiping him alone, and paying honor to Jesus only as his most exalted messenger. If they had been required to regard him as God, the history of their conversion would have been widely differ-

ent from what it is. A doctrine to them so new and wonderful, would have engrossed their minds, would have banished familiarity from their intercourse with the Saviour, would have pervaded their preachings and writings; and, instead of being wholly omitted in their addresses to their converts, would have been made, as in modern creeds, a primary and essential article of belief. Not till the introduction of oriental superstitions into the church, however, do we find unquestionable evidence that such a doctrine had been conceived by any individual mind; and then the information is conveyed in the form of decided censure of the doctrine on the part of the promulgators and guardians of the new faith. Even after this heresy was introduced, we find no traces of it in the works of the Apostolical Fathers, till nearly a century and a half from the birth of Christ,—except in a very few writings, so uncertain in their date, so wild and allegorical in their composition, and so evidently and extensively interpolated, as to be of little or no authority. We refer to the works commonly ascribed to Barnabus, Hermas, and Ignatius. The only genuine epistle of Clemens Romanus which has come down to us, neither advocates,

countenances, nor alludes to any such doctrine.

Even the philosophizing Christians of the first century, against whom the Apostles wrote, went no further than to suppose the Christ to be a superior intelligence, inhabiting a mortal form, or assuming the appearance of one: Cerinthus maintaining that Jesus was a man born of Joseph and Mary, and that at his baptism the Christ descended upon him; while Marcion held that the Son of God took the exterior form of a man, and appeared as a man; and without being born, or gradually growing up to the full stature of a man, he showed himself at once in Galilee as a man grown. It was not till Justin Martyr, himself a philosopher, wrote an apology for Christianity to a philosophical Roman emperor (A. D. 140), that any distinct mention appears to have been made of the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ. It is not surprising that—feeling how great a reproach the death of the cross must be in the eyes of the potentate whom he wished to conciliate, and finding his mode of exposition prepared by the Gnostic Christians, and by the application made by the learned Philo of the Platonic doctrine of the Logos,—Justin

Martyr should have been tempted to recommend his new theology by introducing an admixture of that philosophy which has proved, according to the warnings of the Apostle, a 'vain deceit.' Such we have no hesitation in calling it. A doctrine of this nature cannot be in part true, but liable to mistake: it must be absolutely true or absolutely false. We hold it to be the latter; because it was not made a subject of distinct revelation by Christ, a primary article of belief by the Apostles, or even a matter of distinct mention for a century and a half from the birth of Christ.

All that, from the study of the records of Revelation, we hold to be the primary and essential doctrines of Christianity, stand forth conspicuously in the teachings, are confirmed by the deeds, and illustrated in the lives of the Saviour and his followers. We propose to bring them forward, with their evidence, in the following order.

I. The strict Unity of God.

II. The unlimited nature of the Redemption by Christ.

III. The existence of a Future State.

From these, various subordinate principles may be derived, some of the most important of

which we shall afterwards specify; and then proceed to treat of the temporary sanctions and institutions of Christianity, in distinction from its permanent principles.

It cannot be necessary for Christians, when addressing Christians, to enter upon the evidence for the divine authority under which the Saviour offered his Gospel, or for the consequent divine origin of that Gospel. The name adopted by both parties is a sufficient testimony to the unity of their faith thus far. Concerning the nature of Christ, we have already declared that, in accordance with what we believe to have been the faith of the primitive ages, we regard the Saviour as human in his nature, but superhuman in his powers, and divinely appointed and sanctioned in his office. The title 'Son of God' is peculiarly and indefeasibly his own; for to no other being, as far as our knowledge extends, has so immeasurable a portion of authority, of power, of grace and truth, been vouchsafed; in no other has dwelt 'all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' The homage of reverence cannot be too fully and freely rendered to him who was with God in His manifest presence; who was one with Him in his purposes of eternal salvation to the

human race; who was the exponent of those purposes, and the means of that salvation. The homage of love cannot be too fully and freely rendered to him who suffered for our transgressions, and died for our justification; who loved us with more than earthly love; who suffered in his compassion for the sins and sorrows of men, as well as in the inflictions he sustained for their sakes; and who, though wounded in spirit and tortured in body, made use of the rule, authority, and power with which he was invested, not for his own relief, but for our deliverance. To him who brought us salvation, it is little to offer deep gratitude and unbounded love. The homage of obedience cannot be too fully and freely rendered to him who was wise with the wisdom of God, pure in heart, sinless in his life, and sanctified by grace from the beginning. Even if we did not know that obedience to Christ is the way to life eternal, that obedience would be due to his divine claims: but knowing this, it should be steadfast as our faith, cheerful as our hope, and boundless as our love. Such was the obedience, such were the reverence and love of the holy Apostles; and we desire to participate in them as fully as we join, with heart and mind,

in all that they have said concerning him. They bow before his celestial authority,—so do we. They venerate his perfect holiness,—so do we. They bless his love, testified in his sufferings, sealed by his death, and glorified by his resurrection,—so do we. They strove to be obedient in all things,—and we acknowledge the obligation incumbent on us to be so likewise; and that we may be so, we diligently inquire what were the doctrines which he confirmed and revealed.

The great fundamental doctrine of the strict Unity of Jehovah was abundantly confirmed by the Gospel. It had been long held in its purity by the Jews, and was apprehended by a few, a very few, enlightened heathens. It is called an essential doctrine of Christianity,—not because it was originated by Christianity, but because it was thus first introduced to the world at large, and because no other doctrine could stand without it. It has accordingly been acknowledged in words by all who have taken on themselves the name of Christ, while in its substance it has been held pure by very few, we apprehend, since the apostolic age. By the Unity of God we understand not a unity of substance connected with a variety of

persons, or a unity of persons accompanied with a division of attributes; but a concentration of the attributes of Deity in one eternal, indivisible substance. This, our fundamental religious belief, is derived both from reason and from Scripture, and is confirmed equally by both.

If we examine our own minds, we find that our first notions of a God are low and earthly. We conceive of Him as of an earthly parent, watching over our sleep with bodily eyes, furnishing our food with a bodily hand, and following us from place to place with a material presence. As infancy passes away, our conceptions become less gross. We think of Him as omnipresent and invisible; but, deriving our notions from our experience, we conceive of him as subject to emotions and passions. We believe in the real existence—if not of his smiles and frowns—of his joy, sorrow and anger, pleasure and pain. We can then imagine his knowing and remembering all that has ever taken place, but can scarcely conceive of his unlimited presence. Our childish obedience is then yielded as to our parents,—partly through fear, partly through a desire of approbation, and partly with the hope of

of giving pleasure. All the qualities or attributes which we ascribe to God have their origin and counterparts in our parents, or those who supply their place to us: and in no other way can the conception of Deity be originated. No mind can arrive at the recognition of a general principle, but through an observation of its particular applications; nor can a conception be formed, otherwise than by the gradual reception of its elements; or enlarged, but by adding to their number. From the watchfulness of its parent in satisfying its wants and defending it from injury, the child forms its first notion of Providence; and from the visitings of parental approbation and displeasure, of a moral governor. When the presence of Deity is thus recognised, some more abstract qualities are by degrees attributed to him. Instances of the strength, foresight, and knowledge of the parent are daily witnessed; and these, somewhat magnified, are transferred to Deity;—and the moral attributes have the same origin. Steadiness in awarding recompence, tenderness in inflicting punishment, or readiness in remitting it on repentance, gradually communicate the abstract ideas of justice, compassion, and mercy. Our

first low notions of holiness are formed by putting together all the best qualities we have observed in the persons around us, and supposing them to be unimpaired by the faults we are conscious of in ourselves. All these attributes are ascribed to one Being; and the conception, already more exalted than any we have formed of any other individual being, is further improved by the richer elements of a more extended experience. The imagination becoming stronger as the materials supplied to its activity become more abundant, the conception of Deity perpetually grows in grandeur and beauty, till it absorbs the intellect of a Newton and engrosses the affections of a Fenelon. Still, this notion of a Being whom we know and feel to be infinite, is formed from the results of our finite experience; and the conception, however improved in degree, is unchanged in kind. Let it be magnified to the utmost extent, it is still only magnified, not metamorphosed. As there is a strict analogy between the moral attributes of God and of men, there is also a strict analogy between their natural modes of being. Justice in God is the same quality as justice in men, however perfected and enlarged; and Unity in God is the same as individ-

uality in men, though ascribed to an almighty and omnipresent Being.

A perpetual and perfect concentration of attributes is essential to our notion of one God. We can conceive of his manifesting one attribute in an especial manner on one occasion, and another on another; we can imagine him conferring power analogous to his own on an inferior being; but we cannot conceive of his laying aside, of his depriving himself of any of the attributes of his nature, or of delegating his power,—if by such delegation be implied any diminution or inactivity of it in Himself. It is conceivable that he might employ some superior intelligence in creating the material world (though we have no authority to suppose that he did so;) but it is not conceivable that the work was not, at the same time, wholly his own. It is conceivable that he might send—it is certain that he did send—a being divinely furnished for the work, to institute a dispensation of grace, and to offer pardon and peace to sinful men. But it is not conceivable that the divine attribute of mercy could previously, or subsequently, or ever, be laid aside, or transferred, or suspended; that his unalterable purposes could be changed, his compassion

roused, his sympathies moved by any act of any being, human or angelic. To suppose so, is supposing his purposes mutable, and his compassion dormant; that is, divesting him of Deity. We can, in accordance with our conception of Deity, understand how the dispensation of grace may be committed, as it was committed, to a finite being. But to suppose it the indefeasible prerogative of any eternal Being but God, is clearly to suppose two Gods: and if the office of sanctification be appropriated in a similar manner, we must suppose three Gods. However long and deeply we may reflect and strive to reconcile contradictions, we shall find at length that it is essential to our belief in One God, that we ascribe creation, redemption and sanctification, ultimately wholly to Him 'of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things.'

This unalterable decision of the reason is confirmed in every possible way by revelation. It is needless to adduce proof from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as it is universally known that the Jews held, as the fundamental doctrine of their religion, the strict Unity of Jehovah, in nature, person, and attributes. There is not the slightest intimation, in the records of

the new dispensation, that any change took place in the opinions of the Apostles, or of any other Jewish converts, respecting the nature or person of God. They speak and write of Him as One, ordaining the salvation of the world through Christ, and Himself sanctifying those who were appointed to assist in the work. Jesus ever spoke of himself as the servant of the Most High, deriving his purposes and his powers from on high, and ascribing his achievements to the grace manifested thence: 'I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.' (John viii. 28, 29.) 'My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine (whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' John vii. 16, 17.) Again, in intimating the share which should be apportioned to his disciples in publishing the new dispensation, he says, 'Ye are they who have continued with me in my trials. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones,

judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' (Luke xxii. 28, 29, 30.) It is not conceivable that, anxious as he ever was to attract the attention of men to the nature of his mission, and to magnify the importance of the new covenant, he should have concealed the most wonderful and important circumstance belonging to it, and have not only left men in ignorance of his highest claims to their homage and obedience, but have led them into it. That even his immediate followers and the primitive Church had no suspicion of the Christ being more than the most exalted of God's messengers, we have already declared our conviction; a conviction which is confirmed by every page of their writings. Paul was careful to declare 'the whole counsel of God.' Yet in the passage of his writings in which, above all others he exalts the Saviour, he tells how, for the meekness with which he bore the honors which constituted in him a resemblance to God, for the humility with which he took on him the office of a servant, and the compassion which caused his submission to the death of the cross, ---he was yet more exalted by God, and favored with that name which is above every name, through which every man is privileged

to worship, and every tongue permitted to offer praise, confessing 'that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.' (Phil. ii. 5---11.) Peter, in the discourse by which three thousand persons were converted to Christianity, spoke of Jesus of Nazareth as 'a man approved of God by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him;' and as being made Lord and Christ, raised from death and exalted to heaven by God. John repeats, in every form of expression, that the love of God was especially manifested by his sending his Son to be the Saviour of the world; and that as the Lord manifested his love for us by laying down his life, we also should be ready to lay down our lives for one another. Jude addresses his Epistle to the Christians as to men 'sanctified by God the Father;' and in almost every apostolic benediction and salutation we find the work of sanctification as well as of grace ascribed to the Father.

But it is more satisfactory as well as easy to appeal to the whole body of the sacred writings (which we confidently do,) than to separate passages for proof that God the Father is the sole orig-

inator of every work of nature and of grace; that as winds are his messengers, and flaming fires his ministers in the world of matter,—righteous men, prophets, apostles, and above all, Christ, the Holy One, are his agents in the administration of the spiritual world, and the establishment of the dispensation of grace.

Jehovah being thus sole in the possession of the attributes of Deity, is the sole object of religious worship; for to God alone may such adoration be innocently paid. This assertion rests not alone on the commands delivered from above to the Israelites; though we hold the authority of the second commandment of the Decalogue, as it stands in Protestant Bibles, and is included in the Jewish version of the commandments, to be equal to that of any part of the Mosaic law. 'Thou shalt worship Jehovah thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,' is a summary of the entire purposes and details of the first dispensation; and the fundamental principle on which the second is based.

The prohibitions to the Jews to pray to any but Jehovah are too numerous to be adduced, and too clear to need any further notice than a passing reference. That the Israelites are not forbidden to seek the intercession of departed

spirits is accounted for by their ignorance at first of a life beyond the grave, and their uncertainty respecting its value afterwards: but that there was a total absence of all desire to seek the intercession of a mediator in spiritual communion, is evident. When Elisha stood by Jordan to witness the ascent of Elijah, no prayers were wafted to heaven in the chariot of fire; no grace was sought through the medium of the glorified prophet. When dangers compassed round the prophet and his servant in Dothan, and a vision of heavenly hosts was opened to them, no supplication was offered through the radiant messengers; but Elisha offered his prayer immediately to Jehovah. He, with all his nation, would have felt the liberty of direct communion with God too great a privilege to be forgone, even if the notion had occurred to them. No just fears which they could entertain could be obviated by the employment of an intercessor; no desired blessing could be so easily obtained as by a direct appeal to the compassion of the Father of mercies. It would have been well if the partakers of a fuller measure of grace had, in this respect, been like-minded with their ancient brethren; had felt like them, that the highest spiritual

privilege is a free access to the divine presence, the fairest spiritual promise that which declares 'If thou wilt call, Jehovah shall answer thee. Come nigh unto me, and I will hear thee.'—This privilege it was which Jesus himself used most abundantly; and this promise he sanctioned by word and example, and taught his followers to appropriate. He exhorted them to pray as he himself prayed, in full assurance of faith, freely and immediately. On no subject were his teachings more explicit, or his own practice and that of his Apostles more fully ascertained. He taught them in what spirit, in what manner, and for what objects to pray; viz. believing that what they asked should be given, that what they sought should be found; —retiring into recesses where none could intermeddle with the communion of the heart; seeking whatever is needful for the body and the soul; supplies of the means of life, pardon, grace and peace. After this manner his followers prayed and taught others to pray. Paul mingled prayers for forgiveness of his early misguided zeal with thanksgivings for the grace vouchsafed to him, and ascriptions of praise to the supreme ordainer of salvation. Peter prayed for strength to sustain persecu-

tion, and for guidance in his mission. James directed his hearers to ask of God, if they sought wisdom. In all their exhortations to prayer, however, there is no intimation of a possibility that it may be offered otherwise than immediately to Him to whom the Saviour prayed. Believing, as we are convinced they did, that Christ was the son and servant of Him who heareth prayer, and not authorised to usurp that holy prerogative, no purpose could be answered by addressing supplications to him, but that of alienating the heart of the suppliant from the prime Giver of good, and no motive could be assigned for the act but a criminal distrust of the divine love, or a groundless hope of evading his justice; motives little likely to actuate apostolic minds. To prevent, however, the supposition that such motives could have occurred, that the practice of praying to Christ could have subsisted, we are in possession of a declaration from Jesus himself which obviates all doubt. When about to bid farewell to his Apostles, and to resign himself to death, he promised them comfort from above; and from the fountain of prophetic light within, casts gleams upon the stormy future for the guidance of the trembling pilgrims whom he

left behind. He told them that joy should visit the world through their sorrow; and that his name, exalted by the results of his mission and sanctified by death, should be the seal of the rectitude of their prayers, and the pledge of their success; while he distinctly disclaimed any part in the reception of their prayers, any assumption of the offices of mediation or intercession. 'Ye now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye love me, and believe that I came forth from God.' (John xvi. 22–27.)

According to these sayings, the Apostles made their requests for the more abundant

effusions of grace in the name of Christ; but, believing that the Father himself loved them, they felt no need of other supplication than their own, for benefits which he was more ready to grant than they could be eager to receive. If we may judge of their opinions by the records which remain, we should be convinced that they regarded the Holy Spirit as a divine power only, and not a divine person. As a power, as influence exerted by God himself, is the spirit spoken of in all the writings of the Apostles; as when Paul expresses the relation which the spirit bears to God to be the same as the spirit of a man bears to man; 'What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.' (1 Cor. ii. 11.) The mode in which the operations of the spirit are described by them is perfectly inconsistent with the notion of its being a separate person. Converts were said to be *baptized* with the spirit and *filled* with the spirit, and they were exhorted not to *quench* the spirit. By the direction given to 'baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,' nothing more was understood by the primitive Christians, as we learn

from themselves, than the duty of spreading that religion which was given by God through Jesus Christ, and comfirmed by miraculous power, though, in comparatively modern times, it began to be used as a form prescribed by Christ. As a form it does not appear to have been adopted by his followers, who seem to have baptized in the name of Jesus only. Like Christians of the present day, they believed the Holy Spirit to have been the same by which the ancient prophets spoke; but, unlike the modern belief, their conviction evidently was, that this spirit was the same which moved on the face of the waters when the universe was called up from chaos; the same which was manifested at Sinai; the same which filled the temple of Solomon and abode in the Holy of Holies; the same which wrought the works which Christ declared were not of himself; the same which was and ever shall be, 'above all, through all, and in all.' They believed the Spirit to be God himself, working in his creatures 'to will and to do of his good pleasure.'

The peculiar endowments which were conferred on the disciples in the apostolic age were called the gifts of the Spirit; and the thanksgivings which were presented for them were always

offered immediately to God, from whom every good and perfect gift was known to come. When this Spirit was spoken of as an impersonal existence, as an influence, a power, it could not, of course, be made the object of worship any more than the gifts it brought. When regarded as a personal existence, *i. e.* as God, it was, of course, the object of direct worship. But, as possessing any power of intercession, we may confidently declare it never was appealed to, till the Christian theology had been mixed up with the principles of the heathen philosophy. Among all the figurative illustrations of the offices and powers of the Spirit, among all the highly wrought personifications and bold metaphors which characterize the Hebrew style of the apostolic writings, we find no intimation that homage may be offered, or intercession made, through it or any existence whatever, personal or impersonal. Even the highly figurative passage which we meet with Romans viii. 25—28, and which is, we believe, the chief basis on which rests the practice of false worship in the Christian world, admits of no such interpretation as is commonly given to it. It needs only a careful reading of the whole chapter to perceive that 'the spirit' there spoken of is not the Holy

Spirit; not the immediate divine influence of which we hear so much; but the new life supposed to be introduced by the Gospel, in opposition to 'the flesh' or evil principle by which men were liable to condemnation under the old dispensation. After declaring that the fulness of salvation must be waited for with Christian hope, the apostle continues, 'Likewise this spirit, also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groans which cannot be expressed. But He who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, that it intercedeth for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are called according to his purpose.' In the weakness of our nature, we know not what most to desire and pray for, but the spirit of the Gospel informs and aids us; obtaining for us benefits which we could not otherwise have enjoyed. And the benefits thus obtained are such as the divine will designed for us; all things thus tending to our good; the divine purposes, the aids of the Gospel, and the circumstances amidst which that aid supports us. All this has a very clear reference, not to

any mediation of the Holy Spirit, to which there is no allusion whatever; but to the agency of the new dispensation in delivering men 'from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.'—If the intercession of Christ be needless because the Father himself loveth us, much more needless must be the mediation of the Spirit, even were there such a separate personal existence; and yet more needless must be the good offices of Saints, supposing them capable of rendering such a service to their mortal brethren.

Those who, like ourselves, derive their religious belief from the Bible alone, can scarcely meet on the ground of argument those who profess 'most firmly to admit and embrace apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions,' if the subject of discussion be other than the authority of such traditions. On this discussion we shall enter hereafter. It only belongs to the present division of our subject to observe, that, not admitting the authority of ecclesiastical traditions in matters of faith, and finding in the Scriptures no intimation of homage being due to the mother of Christ, or the holy men who glorified the Gospel in their lives and deaths, we offer no such homage, and

that the worship and invocation of such are a direct infringement of the command, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'

It is not difficult to trace the origin and progress of a custom which, though founded on a natural veneration for holiness sealed by death, is in our opinion more fatal to the purity, and inimical to the dignity of the Gospel that any other which its professors have adopted.—It was a custom in the early times of Christianity, to meet for worship at the tombs of the Martyrs; not for the sake of paying homage to the departed, but because the survivors found their devotional feelings more sensibly excited there. Their imaginations were at the same time possessed by the poetical fictions of the pagan philosophy, which represented the souls of the departed as hovering round the place of interment, and conscious of what was passing near. From this superstition arose the practice of making offerings annually in the name of the deceased, as an acknowledgement that they were still considered members of their respective churches. This practice appears to have been first adopted at the death of Polycarp, and to have speedily grown into a rite

scarcely distinguishable from the superstitions of heathenism. Tertullian observes, 'We make oblations for the dead and for their martyrdom, yearly, on certain days.' At this time it was the general belief that the usual abode of the dead was in subterraneous places, or at least 'below,' somewhere near the earth, and as long as this belief subsisted, prayers were offered *for* the dead,—for their present repose and joyful future resurrection. The Virgin Mary was thus prayed for. As the Martyrs were more highly thought of, however, than other deceased Christians, it began to be imagined, about the middle of the fourth century, that they were, by peculiar favor, admitted earlier to the immediate presence of God, and permitted to exert influence even over his purposes. Then began the solicitations addressed to men doomed to death, that they would be mindful of the survivors; and the agreements of companions, that whichever should first depart should petition at the foot of the heavenly throne for his mortal friend. In a few more years arose the custom of invoking the spirits supposed to hover near the tombs; some hesitation being implied in the expression 'if they were indeed present, and

had any influence in things below.' It was yet a long time before prayer was offered to Saints in general, and in the public services of the Church. That the practice, if it had been originated, was not approved by the Fathers of the Church in the third century, we know on the direct testimony of Origen, who says that men are not to pray to any derived being (not even to Christ himself), but to God the Father of all. Austin disapproved of praying *for* the Saints, though he believed that the Church might be helped by their intercession; at the same time acknowledging, 'It is true the Saints do not themselves hear what passes below, but they hear of it by others who die and go to them.'

The time when the custom of invoking the Saints was first countenanced by the Church may be fixed about the end of the fourth century. In the fifth, all opposition to it had ceased, and the images of Martyrs began to be regarded with peculiar honor; it being imagined by many that the homage paid to the image drew down into it the propitious presence of the celestial being whom it represented; in the same manner as the statues of Jupiter and other pagan gods were believed by heathen

worshipers to become instinct with divine life. The temples of the Martyrs were now, as Theodoret informs us, ornamented with little figures, of gold and silver, representing eyes. feet, hands, &c., deposited for the acceptance of the lords of the temples, as memorials of cures wrought by them on these several members: these memorials proclaiming the power of the dead; whose power, again, demonstrates their God to be the true God. How changed was this Christianity from that given by him who forbade his followers to ask anything even of him, because the Father himself loved them!

Concerning Mary, the mother of Jesus, those who have not vowed to admit ecclesiastical traditions as matters of faith, pretend to little knowledge from the time of the death of Christ. Her name is mentioned but once in the Book of Acts, when she is enumerated among the disciples who were collected after the ascension of Jesus; and how and where she lived and died, we have no means of ascertaining. The first act of respect to her memory which is on record is censured by Epiphanius, as 'a heresy of the women.' It consisted of an offering of cakes, prepared and offered by women only,

and generally disapproved of, (though oblations on tombs were then very common,) because it was not known where she was interred. It may be inferred, however, from the account given by Epiphanius, that prayers were by some persons offered to the Virgin, though he rebukes the new superstition. The first person of authority who is known to have introduced and countenanced the worship of Mary, is Peter Gnapheus, bishop of Antioch, who in the fifth century appointed her name to be invoked in the prayers of the Church. If such homage were her due, how came the Apostles and the apostolic Fathers to withhold it from her? Why was her claim disallowed so long?

We can fully enter into, and are far from disapproving of, the natural curiosity which prompts an inquiry into the fate of one whom all generations unite in calling blessed. When we ponder, as we cannot but do, her privileges above all womanhood besides; when we imagine the intentness of soul with which she must have watched the course of her holy Son; perceiving perhaps before all others the manifestations of divine grace in him; becoming more and more elated in her hopes, as the presence of God in him became more evident; trembling

at the malignity of the rulers and the madness of the people; and finally sinking in desolation of heart when every vital hope appeared extinguished; we cannot but search for an authentic record of what befell her after the day when the beloved disciple took her to his own home. But being convinced, as we are, that no such record exists, we dare not fill up the history with conjectures of our own; much less admit the claims founded on fable and supported by superstition, which are advanced in her favor by writers who possessed no more knowledge of her state than ourselves, and who were much less impressed by experience with the importance of keeping religion pure, simple, and undefiled. We regard Mary as one of the most interesting persons presented by history, but as in no respect connected with the Gospel we receive. Christianity was not revealed till Christ became a man; and as Mary had no act or part in its diffusion, she bears no other relation to us than as a being whose lot engages our sympathies, and whose tender nature and pious character should excite our affection and emulation. For the same reasons, however largely we may share the universal curiosity respecting the state of the dead, however ra-

tionally our philosophy may conceive, or however vividly our imaginations may represent them as living, as observing the course of events, as participating in our emotions, as enjoying the manifest presence of God, we dare not found any religious belief or practice on such speculations. If our religious observances had been in any way connected with the dead, we should have known something of their state and offices; but as no such knowledge is imparted, as there was no pretension to it in the earliest ages, and especially as Christianity clearly points to God as the sole object of religious worship, we invoke the departed for no other purpose than to satisfy our speculative doubts, we attribute to them no other office than that of endearing the past and hallowing the future, and offer no other oblations than those of the memory and the affections. Even if we believed them permitted to intercede for us with our Father, we should be slow to seek their aid; for if there be one privilege more precious than another, it is that of direct, intimate communion with Him who knoweth our weakness and our strength; if there be one provision more sacred than another in the charter of our 'glorious liberty,' it is that by which they who are

far off and they who are near have equal access unto the Father; not through the ministrations of inferior spirits, but face to face in the sanctuary of his presence. He is not only our sure, but our near refuge; not only our unfailing, but our very present help; not only our hope, but our perpetual joy. The deepest of our joys and griefs, those which it is most necessary to confide to Him who caused them, are absolutely incommunicable to all besides; and what is emphatically true of our self-communings, that 'the heart knoweth its own bitterness,' is yet more true of spirit worship, 'no stranger intermeddling with its joy.'

Having thus stated the grounds of our dissent from that clause of the symbol of Pius IV. which declares that 'the Saints reigning together with Christ are to be honored and invocated, and that they offer prayers to God for us,' it is needless to notice what follows; viz. that their relics are to be venerated; 'that the images of Christ and the Mother of God, ever Virgin, and also of the other saints, are to be had and retained; and that due honor and veneration are to be given to them.' Such practices we hold to be utterly inconsistent with the principle that God is the sole object of religious worship; which principle is derived from what we have

laid down as the first essential doctrine of Revelation,—the Unity of Jehovah.

The next essential doctrine is,

II. The unlimited extent of the Redemption by Christ.

A large proportion of the differences which have arisen in the Christian world respecting the doctrine of redemption, proceed from the variety of meanings which is attached to the term *salvation.* While one party understands by it an admission to the privileges of the Gospel, and a consequent emancipation from the penalties of the old dispensation; another, the state of virtue and peace which will prevail when Christianity has compassed the globe; and a third, a future state of perfect bliss in contrast to one of eternal torment; there is little hope of a mutual understanding respecting the doctrine of Justification. Our part now is to state our own views, and not to enter on any discussion of those of others.

We believe that by *salvation* the Scripture writers commonly signified the state of privilege into which Christian believers were brought by their adoption of the principles of holiness and peace which the Gospel affords. Thus, according to its original meaning, the term was

appropriated to a state of comparative blessedness in this world; but as the principles of the Gospel exert the most powerful influence over our spiritual state, over our capacity for happiness in a future world, the term Salvation has naturally and not improperly been accommodated to signify a state of future safety and bliss. That it did not always mean this, however, is evident to all attentive readers of the Scriptures; as there is not one of Paul's epistles or discourses which would be intelligible, if he were supposed to declare his converts saved from the pains of hell, instead of from the dominion of the evils of heathenism, or the condemnation of the Jewish law. By *redemption*, we understand a release from the same evils and penalties effected by a sacrifice on the part of a benevolent mediator. By *remission of sins*, we understand the forgiveness and consequent remission of punishment which are promised in the Gospel on condition of repentance and newness of life. By *justification*, we believe the sacred writers sometimes to signify the process by which believers are released from all obligations incurred towards the old law, and brought into a state of spiritual freedom; and sometimes that free state itself. We conceive that this interpreta-

tion of terms—not new and arbitrary, but only divested of the false associations which have been long gathering round them—will clear up most of the mysteries which obscure a very important Christian doctrine, and enable us, in comparing scripture with scripture, to discern a consistency of views and a depth of truth which afford an irresistible evidence of their divine authority.

The whole scheme of revelation we conceive to be the method designed by the divine wisdom, and adopted by the divine benevolence, for bringing the human race into a state of purity and peace more rapidly than could be effected by the religion of nature. The welfare of the whole race was no less the object of the Jewish than of the Christian dispensation, though its apparent privileges were confined to the peculiar people. These privileges, immediately and positively advantageous to the chosen people, were remotely and relatively so to others, by establishing before their eyes evidences of a divine moral government; and as a moral government implies consistency of authority, it affords a strong presumption of the unity of the Governor. The Jews were led on from the fundamental principle of the Divine

Unity to the apprehension of a divine moral government; while observant heathens, perceiving the moral results of the national vicissitudes of the Hebrew people, deduced thence the truth of the Unity of the Deity. Meanwhile, both were advancing to a state of fitness for a fuller revelation; the Jews more rapidly than the heathens, as being specially placed under the schoolmaster who was to bring them unto Christ; but still, dispensing spiritual benefits towards the heathen, for whose sake as well as for their own they were placed in a state of privilege. The old dispensation, though a condition of light and privilege compared with that of nature, was a state of darkness and bondage when contrasted with Christianity. Though the Hebrews had more elevated conceptions of God and clearer notions of duty than the Gentiles, they yet could not appreciate the riches of divine grace, or the extent of divine and human relations, or the full beauty of holiness. They were burdened by a heavy yoke of ritual observances; an escape from the penalties of the law was impossible; and especially, they had no certain knowledge of a future life. The blessings therefore which Christianity offered,—the *redemption* from the

bondage of the law, the *remission* of the penalties of sin on repentance, the *justification* by which they were placed in a condition of spiritual power and freedom,—were worthy of all the exultation experienced and all the thanksgivings expressed by those who were thus redeemed, forgiven, and justified. These blessings were yet more valuable to the Gentiles, in proportion to the more rigorous bondage and deeper moral darkness to which they had been subjected. Instead of the strict but salutary discipline of the law, they had sustained the tyranny of lawless appetites and passions, had lived without other restraints than those of nature; and had no hope in death, but the glimmering and uncertain presages which their own faculties or long-corrupted traditions supplied.

The mode of preparation for the introduction of the Gospel affords a strong presumption that its benefits were intended for the whole race. The Jews had been led on to the point when their spiritual development absolutely required a more expansive revelation; and the Gentiles were prepared, by their observation of the Hebrew people, and by their own wants, sins, and sorrows, to receive with joy happier tidings than their fondest hopes could antici-

pate, and richer benefits than their desires could previously have comprehended. The benefits of the Gospel, after being offered to the Jews and partially accepted by them, were freely held out to the whole human race, and received by all who were conscious of the need of them: so that the Gospel was truly what the aged Simeon declared it, 'the salvation which God had prepared before all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.'

Yet there were many among the people of Israel who were blind to this glory, and many of the Gentiles who rejected this guiding light. This rejection was not caused by any restrictive quality in the revelation, any provision in the Gospel itself for the limitation of its privileges: nor was it caused by any previous arbitrary decree of the ordainer of salvation, that on account of some very ancient event, totally unconnected with the present dispensation, a large majority of the human race should be rendered absolutely incapable of participating in the blessings of redemption. It was occasioned by the prejudices of narrow minds, by the ignorance of darkened minds, by the spiritual pride of presumptuous minds, by the petty

hopes and fears of selfish minds,—prejudices, ignorance and selfishness naturally arising in the then state of the world, and not to be immediately or speedily got rid of but by miracle: a mode of agency which the Divine Being has frequently made use of to sanction his revelations, but never to prepare the human mind for their reception. Thus spiritual ignorance and moral blindness are, we apprehend, the only obstacles to universal redemption; and we firmly believe that these obstacles are only temporary. The Gospel itself bears such an indisputable character of permanence and universality (as we shall hereafter show), and so evident a provision is made for the gradual dissipation of darkness and error, that we may confidently anticipate the time when the hope of the Gospel shall be the rich possession of every individual of every nation.

That it will be so we conclude, not from the persuasion of our own hopes, or at the bidding of our reason in opposition to the declarations of Scripture; but because every principle derived from the Gospel sanctions the commands of our reason and affords a warrant of our hope. There is in no Gospel, History, or Epistle, a hint of any restriction or limitation of the bless-

ings of redemption. Christ is ever spoken of as having died for all; there are thanksgivings in the name of all, invitations embracing all, and anticipations of the ultimate bliss of all. Those who are mourned over, reproached, entreated, compassionated, because they will not accept freedom and peace, are spoken of as excluded by their own unfitness for grace, arising from natural causes, and not by any sin of any ancestor, or by any arbitrary decree of God, or by any repellant and exclusive character in the dispensation of grace itself. Its most distinguishing character, on the contrary, was its boundlessness. Its first work was to throw down the wall of partition which had separated the favored people from others, to abolish arbitrary distinctions, to exchange the multifarious conditions of the old law for the few, simple and universal requisites of salvation declared in the new. If other distinctions have since been instituted, other conditions imposed, other requisites insisted on, they are no part of Christianity, and shall no more impede its ultimate prevalence than the cloud which shrouds the lightning can prevent its shining from one part of the heaven unto the other.

It may be objected, and with justice, that

this method of considering the scheme of justification makes out the gift of grace to be only ultimately and not strictly universal; unlimited in its tendencies, but hitherto very limited in the diffusion of its blessings: and hence may arise an inquiry concerning the fate of those who have died without the hope of the Gospel.

As to the limited spread of the Gospel thus far, it is our business not to assign the final cause of the fact, but to admit and reason on the fact itself. The fact occasions no horror in our minds, and less regret than is felt perhaps by any denomination of Christians besides ourselves; and for this reason, that we do not hold perdition to be the only alternative to salvation by Christ. We find no sanction for so fearful a collocation of terms in the record of the covenant; no mode of reconciling the doctrine thus originated with the attributes of Deity, or with our conceptions of justice, much less of benignity. Moreover we can clearly discern through what misconception the monstrous belief in the everlasting destruction of unbelievers, whether by natural or moral necessity, has sprung to birth. We believe it to have arisen from the before-mentioned misap-

prehension of the terms Salvation, Remission of sins, and Justification.

To the enjoyment of the blessings of the Gospel no alternative could be opposed but their non-possession; to the remission of sins, but their retention; to justification, but condemnation under the law. But it does not follow that when these terms are shifted from their original use, and accommodated to a subject to which they do not naturally belong, they should be still opposed to each other, no others being allowed to intervene. If it be generally agreed to understand by *Salvation* a state of perfect bliss after death, it is well: but if any man then choose to transfer the term *Perdition* from meaning the loss of the privileges of Christianity to the loss of the happiness of heaven and a consequent subjection to the pains of hell, he goes further than the customary use of language allows, further than reason can sanction, and much further astray from a true theology than he can at present estimate, or can hereafter sufficiently deplore. It is mournful enough that myriads have died in ignorance and error, that thousands have rejected offered light; but no words can express the horror of the popular doctrine of the eternal condemna-

tion of all who have not died in the faith of Christ, or our reprobation of the corruption through which such a doctrine has been originated, received, and retained. While we believe that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and that 'all things are but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord,' we cannot believe that wrath from above and misery from below, sin from within and darkness around, destined to be dissipated only by the flames of hell, are the portion of all but those who are equally happy with ourselves. Our belief appears to us more consistent with our apprehensions of the perfections of our Father, with our interpretations of his providence, and with the spirit of his revealed law. We believe that though Christianity is the focus in which all the lights of reason and religion are concentrated, every ray is not there absorbed. We believe that though shadows brood more or less darkly over every heathen land, there is in the most remote a glimmering of the dawn; a ray which may direct the eye towards the fountain of glory, and engage the attention to watch the rising of that sun which shall set no more.

We believe that the rewards of righteousness

are promised to all; and that the practice of righteousness is not limited to any kindred, tongue, or people, or essentially connected with any religious belief. We hold that retribution is the universal sanction of the universal moral law; and if the nature of the sanction be more fully understood by Christians, and therefore practically admitted with greater readiness, let them be as grateful as they will for the great privilege, but beware of supposing that the sanction is abolished to all besides. Under the various obscurations of this sanction, savage virtue may be inferior to civilized, —Hottentot to Roman virtue, as both are to Christian holiness; but there is every reason to believe that the savage who surrendered his hard-earned meal to the hungry stranger, and the Pagan senators and warriors who toiled and bled for their country, were as sure of an appropriate reward as the most benevolent and heroic of Christians.

The unlimited nature of salvation in this sense, leads us on to another great doctrine of the Gospel; viz.

III. A Future State.

This truth, the most important to human improvement, the most interesting to human af-

fections, was so fully brought to light by the Gospel, that Christians have differed respecting it no further than as to the time and mode in which future retribution will take place. That Jesus died on the cross, was inclosed in the sepulchre, and was led forth thence by the manifest power of God, are facts too well authenticated to be questioned to any purpose by the most hardy sceptic; and on them securely rests the sublime belief which, from the midst of obscurity, had already cheered the bereaved, animated the martyr, and exalted the hopes and fears of the great body of the Hebrew nation. They had been led, like many of the Gentiles, by the mournful questionings of their affections, to inquire concerning a future state, and at length to believe in it; but their indistinct belief was widely different in nature and far inferior in power to the firm and clear faith with which the resurrection of Christ authorized them to look forward. Their former belief was strong enough to reconcile them to death; and perhaps they had sufficiently clear convictions that the future life would be a scene of retribution, to govern their own conduct by some regard to it; but the evidence was not such as to authorize their pressing on

the minds of others the motives which the doctrine now affords. Without the evidence of the facts of Christ's resurrection, Paul could not have made Felix tremble at the prospect of judgement to come; or have enforced the duties of masters to their servants by considerations of their accountability to a master in heaven; or have felt how far better it was to depart and be with Christ than to pursue his earthly labors. Without this evidence, Stephen could not have met his fate as if he had been welcoming the hour of rest from which the beams of a new day should awaken him. Without this evidence, no one of the Apostles could have passed through his labors and sufferings with zeal, patience, and cheerfulness; for we have their own testimony, that if in this life only they had had hope in Christ, they would have been of all men the most miserable. Without this evidence, not only would the hopes of millions who have since lived have vacillated, the peace of millions have been at the mercy of sickness and death, and their spiritual strength in perpetual peril from temptation, but the state of morals through the whole civilized world, imperfect as it yet is, would have been far inferior to what we see it,

and could never attain the purity which we confidently anticipate in some future age. Without this evidence, Christianity would be almost nothing; for the doctrine of future retribution is not only its most important revelation, but it is so intimately connected with every other, as a sanction, that the Church might as well be supposed complete without its chief corner-stone, as Christianity to be efficacious if deprived of this last grand truth. This evidence we have, however; and possessing it, it is of comparatively little importance how widely men differ in their speculations as to the time and mode in which the future life shall succeed to the present, and as to the nature of the rewards and punishments which shall follow their probation. The belief in a certain and righteous retribution is all that is enforced upon us by Christianity, all that is a necessary consequence of our faith in the resurrection of Christ. Yet, as a tendency to unauthorized speculation, and also a misapprehension of some Scriptural expressions, appear to us to have caused a very extensive forgetfulness that retribution is not only certain, but will be righteous, we must enter on some explanation of our views respecting the extent of punish-

ment of which the life to come is to be the scene.

We say respecting the *extent* only, because the *nature* of the punishment is a subject of far inferior importance, and one on which we possess so little light that it may fairly be left to the imagination of each individual to conceive for himself. Some persons, perhaps the great majority of every denomination of Christians, believe that the pains of actual burning will be inflicted on a corporeal frame, susceptible of suffering in the same way as the body which we at present inhabit, but rendered indestructible. Others conceive that the Scripture language which describes the wicked as tormented by fire is metaphorical, and that it clearly refers, by way of allusion, to the valley of Hinnom, where corrupt substances were devoured by worms, and where human sacrifices were offered by fire to Moloch. Such imagine that the future sufferings of the wicked will be purely mental, but not therefore the less severe and awful. If it had been necessary to form clear conceptions on this subject, a fuller light would have been cast upon it; and as that fuller light is not granted, we may fairly suppose that we cannot at present understand the exact

nature of the evil of which we are emphatically called on to beware. But of the duration of the evil, we believe ourselves so far qualified to judge, as to anticipate that it will not be eternal.

Our reasons for thus determining are various. It is, in the first place, utterly inconceivable that God should appoint to any individual of his creatures a lot in which misery predominates over happiness. Our belief in the Divine prescience requires that we suppose the fate of every man to be ordained from the beginning. Our faith in the Divine mercy requires that we should expect an overbalance of good in the existence of every being thus ordained; and that in no case can the punishment be disproportionate to the offence. Our faith in the Divine benevolence inspires a conviction that all evil is to be made subsidiary to good, and that therefore all punishment must be corrective, all suffering remedial. Thus far the light of nature teaches us to anticipate the final restitution of sinners.

It is confirmed by revelation,—by every passage of the sacred records which represents God as a tender Father to all the human race, as just and good, as incapable of being 'angry for

ever,' or of taking pleasure in the punishment of the wicked, and as chastising in mercy, for corrective purposes. It is confirmed by every passage which describes the good brought into the world by Christ as overbalancing the evil produced by the introduction of sin and death. It is confirmed by every passage which prophetically announces the triumph of the Gospel over all adverse powers,—death, sin, and sorrow. Above all, it is confirmed by the whole tenor of the preachings and writings of the Saviour and his followers,—by the spirit of boundless benevolence, of joyful faith, of exulting hope, which is every where blended with their emphatic warnings of the perils of sin, and their mournful regret for the infatuation of sinners. It appears to us that against all this array of evidence on the one side, little or none can be adduced on the other.

That which is brought forward most frequently and with the most show of reason is the expressions commonly translated *everlasting*, and which are applied both to the future happiness of the righteous and misery of the wicked. These terms (which are much less frequently applied to a future state than is commonly supposed) do not invariably signify 'everlasting' and 'eter-

nal,' as is evident from their being applied to various institutions and states which have already come to an end and passsd away: as to the covenant with Abraham, which is declared to have been long since annulled; to the priesthood of Aaron, of which no vestiges remain; and to the flames of Gehenna, which have been quenched for ages. The strictly correct rendering of the terms in these cases is *permanent*, *continual*, *lasting*, and not absolutely eternal.

In order to reconcile the terms as usually rendered with the attribute of Divine justice, some Christians have imagined that the limited punishment of the wicked will be followed by immediate destruction; but this supposition leaves the difficulty where it was before, and is besides destitute of all support from reason or Scripture; as it is incompatible with the character of the Divine dispensations that punishment should be appointed for any but corrective purposes, or that sin and sorrow should triumph in the annihilation of any individual of God's creatures.

If we are asked why then we firmly believe in the immortality of the righteous? we reply, that we found our faith on much better evidence than the use of the terms we have now been

considering. We believe it, because the happiness of the creature is the fulfilment of the ends of creation and providence; because happiness is an eternal principle, while misery is only a temporary influence; and because it would argue imperfection in the Deity, if he were either unable or unwilling to prolong a holy and blissful existence.

This doctrine,—of the limited and corrective nature of future punishment,—is often likened by those who disbelieve and disapprove it, to the Catholic doctrine of purgatory; a likeness which Catholics and Unitarians are perhaps equally unwilling to admit, though the latter have little doubt that the belief in purgatory is a corruption of the genuine doctrine as they hold it now.

It was the opinion of many of the Fathers in very early times, that the world would be destroyed by fire; that the good would be purified by the process, and the wicked consumed. It is clear that they derived a part of this belief from some other source than the Scriptures; but it is equally clear that they had no notion of an eternity of torment. Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, his master, with Gregory Nazianzen, and others of the Fathers, held that the

wicked would survive this punishment, and come out purified and fit for a blissful state. The Catholic doctrine of purgatory probably arose out of some of these opinions, though it embraces much which does not appear to have entered into the imaginations of the Fathers. Its substance, as declared in the councils of Florence and Trent, is that every man is liable both to temporal and eternal punishment for his sins; that the eternal punishment may be escaped by faith in the atonement of Christ; but that the temporal must be borne by the individual in this world or at his entrance on the next; that the sufferings of those who undergo purgation may be relieved by the prayers and suffrages of their earthly brethren, though in what manner this relief is wrought, whether by a process of satisfaction, or of intercession, or of any other method, it is not essential to true faith to be certified. Neither is it necessary to know where the place of purgation is; of what nature its pains are, and how long sufferers may be detained there. The belief in purgatory was, for some ages, held by all Christians, except the ancient Waldenses, who left the Church of Rome before the doctrine was established there, and who never admitted it. Soon after the

Reformation, it was abandoned by all who left the Church of Rome; so that it has since been peculiar to that church.

Our reasons for rejecting it are, that we find no trace of it in Scripture, and that, as we declared before, we do not admit ecclesiastical traditions as matters of faith. We also reject the notion that any part of the punishment of sin can be escaped through the sacrifices, or mediation, or intercession of any being whomsoever. We have been frequently accused of impairing a divinely appointed sanction by asserting the limited extent of future punishment; but we think that the sanction is, in reality, abolished by the admission that the Divine decrees may be set aside by human acts, and that the relations of good and evil, virtue and vice, which are declared to be immutable, may be changed at the pleasure of mortal agents. We believe the punishment of sin to be of limited duration; but as certain as the existence of the moral agent, and as little capable of remission through the will of any created being as the law which regulates the rise and fall of the tides, the changes of the moon, and the revolutions of the planets. We hold it to be awful, not only from its certainty, but from its concealed na-

ture. It will doubtless transcend all that the experience of earth can suggest to the imagination. Can it be said that we impair this sanction when we hold that the suffering consequent on guilt is absolutely certain, lasting in its duration, and inconceivably dreadful in its nature? What apprehensions could be fitted to excite greater dread?

For the purpose of explaining why we believe that no part of the consequences of guilt can be evaded through the sacrifices, mediation, or intercession of any being whatsoever, it is necessary to pass on to the next division of our subject. Having stated the three leading doctrines of Christianity, the Unity of God, the unlimited scope of the plan of redemption, and a future state, we now proceed briefly to examine the principles of morals proposed by the Gospel.

The fundamental truths of Morals are eternal as He to whom they primarily relate, and immutable as the purposes which they subserve. But it is necessary that they should be communicated to men under different forms and according to various methods, as minds are prepared to receive them: and their application must also be regulated according to the cir-

cumstances in which men are placed. The same principle was proposed to Adam in Paradise, to Abraham in Beersheba, and to Paul when he set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, knowing that bonds and afflictions awaited him there. Obedience to God was the motive proposed for abstaining from the forbidden fruit, for sacrificing an only son, and for facing suffering and death. But an intimation which was all powerful with Abraham was insufficient to secure a much less painful obedience from Adam; and the self-devotion of Paul was ennobled in all its manifold instances, by its springing, not from so many express directions, but from a principle, undeviating and perpetual in its operation. In the infancy of the race, it would have been utterly useless to reveal the grand principles of morals in any other way than that which was adopted, viz. by exhibiting their application in various instances. The Divine will was therefore made known in express directions, probably very few in number at first, and gradually increasing in number and importance, so as to enable observers, from remarking the similar tendency of several, to infer a general principle from them. All the records which we possess of the history of

the race to the calling of the Israelites out of Egypt, prove this to have been the method adopted. The commands of God, and the promises and threats by which they were sanctioned, bore an analogy, in their gradual elevation, to those by which we influence an opening mind in its progress from the first manifestation of intelligence to the age when the power of conscience is recognizable. In the Mosaic system, a considerable advance was made, a direct appeal to conscience being instituted, and the gradual revelation of a moral government being provided for. Men were then taught, not what we now know, that the relation between virtue and happiness, vice and misery, is immutable (which they could not have understood,) but that in their particular case, obedience to certain laws would secure prosperity, and disobedience adversity. Such obedience, the most virtuous were incited to render, from a fear and love of God; but they could not have rendered it in any but specified cases, because, not yet being made acquainted with the principle as a principle, they could not direct its application for themselves. The case was the same with the other great principle, Benevolence, as with Piety; and, ac-

cordingly, the body of laws which was prepared for the Israelites was voluminous, and their sanctions were expressed in a copious variety of promises and threatenings, and embodied in a burthensome ritual, consisting chiefly of penal acts. When the nation had thus been exercised long enough to prepare it for entering on a new course of moral agency (as we prepare a child for the spontaneous exercise of filial duty and fraternal love by a discipline of express commands and particular acts,) Christianity was dispensed, and men were at length furnished with the principles themselves, with whose application they were henceforth to be entrusted.

Christianity was designed to be permanent and universal; and, therefore, though it was first communicated in the form best adapted to those who were first to receive it, it contains within itself that which shall fit it to be a revelation to the mind of man in every stage.

It contains eternal principles of doctrine and morals, embodied in facts, which are the only immutable and universal language. The character of Christ affords a never-failing suggestion, and a perfect illustration of the principles of morals; a suggestion which only the most careless minds can fail to receive, and an illustration

by which only the most hardened can fail to be impressed. From him it was learned what part of the moral law of Moses was to be retained and what forgone; how much was vital and permanent and how much external and temporary. From him it was learned, and shall be learned to the end of time, how the sympathy which caused tears at the grave of Lazarus, the compassion which relieved the widowed mother of Nain, the tenderness which yearned towards the repentant Apostle, the diffusive love which embraced in its prayer all of every age and nation who needed the gospel of grace, combined to enforce and adorn the principle of Benevolence. His parables are eloquent in their praise of benevolence; his entreaties to mutual love are urgent, and his commands decisive; but the eloquence of his example is by far more urgent and irresistible. From him it was, and ever shall be, learned that the rule of life is to be found in the will of God. From his devotion to the work which God had given him to do, from his perpetual reference of all things to the Divine will, from his unhesitating submission to suffering and death, from his supreme delight in devotional communion, we learn how Piety is the pre-eminent principle of

feeling and action which men are required to adopt. The parables which inculcate ready filial obedience and sorrow for disobedience, the declarations that it was his meat and drink to do the will of God, and that he was not alone because the Father was with him, are powerful enforcements of the principle; but not so powerful as the acts of obedience and resignation in which its power shone forth. The whole scheme of morals is comprehended in the precepts, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself;' but the concentration of truth and beauty is less resplendant, less engaging, less universally clear and interesting, than in the character of him who deduced these two principles from all the law and the prophets.

With these two principles, and all the subordinate ones which are derived from them, are connected sanctions from above, which attest their origin and secure their adoption. By an irreversible decree of Him who founded nature and vouchsafed a revelation, certain states of enjoyment and suffering are connected with the practical adoption or rejection of the principles of duty, not by way of arbitrary appoint-

ment, but of natural consequence. The relations of holiness and happiness, of guilt and misery, are unalterable; shown to be so by the teachings of nature and experience, by the explicit declarations of Scripture, and by every species of evidence which the mind of man is capable of receiving.

Though the chief object of the Christian revelation was to make this relation more evident than it had ever been before, many who received the Gospel imagine that it discovers to them a means by which the relation may be suspended or destroyed. This misapprehension we hold to be more fatal in its moral consequences than any other which human prejudice has originated. By what appears to us a strange perversion of Scripture language, and by the gradual increase of some subordinate errors, it began to be imagined, some centuries ago, that, though misery is necessarily connected with guilt, yet that the guilt may be perpetrated by one person, and the consequent misery endured by another; and this belief has subsisted in almost every Christian church till this day. It is well that it has been confined to the churches, and that its application has been limited, by all but Catholics, to one very

peculiar case; for if it had become the common doctrine of our schools, and colleges, and homes, if it had been enforced by parents and moral philosophers and professors as a general truth, as it is by divines with reference to a particular case, the very foundations of virtue would have been overthrown, and the force of its sanctions not only wasted but fatally perverted.

Happily the accents of reason and religion have been too distinct and harmonious to be overpowered by the dictates of error, or very extensively neglected. Notwithstanding all that religious teachers have erroneously inculcated of the possible and actual separation of guilt and its punishment on the principle of vicarious suffering, education has still proceeded, and moral discipline been enforced as if no such false principle had ever been advocated. Children are swayed by hope and fear of the consequences of their actions to themselves; and self-government is enforced at a riper age by the same motives, though enlarged and elevated. In religion alone has an error, as absurd in its nature as injurious in its tendencies, been retained thus long by the force of prejudice; and that it has not spread further we

hold to be owing to its manifest folly and to its evidently noxious influence when applied to any case but that to which it is appropriated. There can be no surer proof that the principle itself is false.

It is difficult to know where to begin in disproving a doctrine which is repugnant to every other doctrine, inconsistent with every received truth, and incompatible with every admitted divine and human relation, with every known attribute of mind, divine or human. It will be sufficient to state one reason for utterly rejecting as we do the doctrine of vicarious suffering; that reason being suggested and confirmed both by our own understandings and by Scripture.

It is clear that no man can sin for another. He may sin at the instigation of another, or for the supposed benefit of another; but in the first case, the sin remains with both, and in the last, with the perpetrator only. Moral disease thus bears an exact analogy to natural disease. Natural disease may be communicated, or even incurred for the benefit of another, but it cannot be so transferred as to be annihilated with respect to the person who was first subject to it. The case is precisely the same with the pain which is the inseparable consequence of sin.

If endured by any but the sinner, it is actually and completely disconnected with the sin. It is no longer a punishment, but a gratuitous infliction. This is so evident that, if proposed in any court of justice but that from which our purest conceptions of justice are derived, the reason and conscience of every man would exclaim against the monstrous notion of a substitution of punishment. If a man had transgressed the laws of his country by theft, would he not be the most unjust judge upon earth who would sentence his elder brother, known to be innocent and virtuous, to imprisonment or death for the offence?

Would the case be altered, except in the way of aggravation, if the sentence were inflicted at the desire of the innocent man? Would any purpose of justice be answered by such a process? Would not every principle of equity—to say nothing of benevolence—be violated? Would not the sufferer be as foolish and blind in his submission as the judge arbitrary in the infliction? Is it not utterly impossible that a transaction, perfectly analagous in principle, though infinitely more momentous in its influences, should take place between the just Judge, the tender Father of men, a creature made fallible by Him, and His holy and beloved Son?

But we are told it is not for us to argue thus on the right and wrong of a transaction which has taken place, and is continually taking place, by Divine appointment. It is enough that God has appointed this method of salvation.

The lawfulness of examining the Divine decrees with intent to understand them, will be discussed hereafter. Our business now is to declare why we do not believe this to be the appointed method of salvation, set forth in the sacred records. Repentance (including not merely shame and sorrow for sin, but newness of life) appears to us to stand forth on the face of the sacred records as the grand, the sole, condition of forgiveness of sins. The faith in Christ, which is so strenuously insisted on as a requisite, is valuable as inducing sorrow for sin and purity of life. Our obligations to Christ, which are so vividly described, are due to him for the benefits he has bestowed on us through his Gospel, and not for any subsequent arbitrary gift, which we feel it impossible for him to have offered, for us to avail ourselves of, and for God to accept. Our obligations to him are boundless and eternal;—for having devoted and sacrificed his life to furnish us with the conditions of salvation,—to teach us re-

pentance, and incite us to holiness. He was truly a sacrifice for men; he suffered and died because they were sinners, and in order to bring them salvation. This the Scripture teaches, and this we readily admit; finding, however, no intimation that any sin has ever been forgiven on any other condition than that of repentance; that repentance has ever failed to procure forgiveness; that any being whatever has at any time exercised or possessed the power of separating sin and suffering by taking either upon himself, or of transferring both from the consciousness of another to his own; that if the endurance of suffering by substitution were possible, it could not be righteous; or that if it were not unrighteous, it could be available to any beneficent purpose. Finding none of these suppositions, but all their opposites in the spirit and detail of the sacred records, we absolutely reject the popular doctrine of the atonement by Christ, while we regard his sacrifices for us with reverential gratitude, and our obligations to him with awe and rejoicing.

The more attentively we ponder his instructions and the more amply we estimate the benefits he brought us, the more conscious do we

become of the impiety of withholding from the Supreme Author of our salvation the gratitude and praise which are due to his free, unpurchased grace. It is given through Christ, but it originates in God. It comes through a mediator; but that mediator was appointed, informed, guided by God. To him Christ ascribed, not only the acceptance of his sacrifice and mediation; but the design in which it originated, the means by which it was wrought, and the end which it should ultimately accomplish; and the more we contemplate the design, become acquainted with the means, and joyfully anticipate the end, the more eagerly do we join with Christ in ascribing to Jehovah the glory and the praise.

We will now explain our meaning in saying that the Catholics alone, of all Christians who have admitted the doctrine of satisfaction for sin, have not restricted its application to one very peculiar case. They have been perfectly consistent in not so restricting it; and they would have been more extensively consistent if they had gone as much beyond the point they have reached, as they have beyond the Church of England and the disciples of Calvin. If the principle be sound, it will bear a bound-

less application; if it be unsound, it can be no part of revelation, and should be instantly relinquished. If atonement for sin by a transference of punishment be possible in any case, it cannot be pronounced impossible in any similar case. If spiritual guilt can be atoned for by ritual sacrifices, in any instance, no one knows that it may not in any other instance. Therefore if the Church of England holds that the Jewish sacrifices were in strict analogy with that of Christ, they cannot reasonably condemn the offering of the mass, and pious gifts offered by the innocent on behalf of the sinner. Neither can the Calvinists, who regard the Mosaic offerings as atonements for spiritual sin, consistently object to the practice of penance, or the principle of granting indulgences. It appears to us that there is no tenable ground between the ultimate extension of the principle and its absolute rejection,—between dissolving to each individual the connection between guilt and punishment, and asserting that connection to be absolutely indissoluble: thereby maintaining the genuine Scripture doctrine that repentance alone can obtain remission of sins.

The lawfulness of the practice of penance

and the enjoyment of indulgences is, we perceive, defended by Catholics as being established on the same ground as the Jewish sacrifices. They expressly state that the *eternal* pain due to guilt cannot be removed by indulgences, or averted by penance, but only the temporal pain over which the death of Christ has no power of remission. This bears a strong analogy to the case of the Mosaic sacrifices, which were ceremonial atonements for breaches of the ceremonial law, and were not of themselves, as is universally allowed, intended to avert the penalties of spiritual guilt. But this analogy yields no countenance to the Catholic practices we are considering, unless it can be proved that two distinct species of punishment were divinely ordained, and two distinct methods of atonement prescribed. And even if this were proved, the case would not be complete: for though we should suppose two kinds of punishment, and two methods of reconciliation appointed, it is further necessary that the offender should be liable to two distinct species of offence; a position in which none but an ancient Jew was ever placed.

The Divine sanctions were altogether so different under the Jewish from what they are

declared to be under the Christian dispensation, that no analogy which can be instituted between them will hold with any completeness. A future state of retribution formed no part of the revelation made to the Jews. To them, the ultimate punishment which they could anticipate was national adversity, which was the infallible consequence of moral guilt (unless averted by repentance), as ritual penalties were were the necessary atonement for breaches of the external law. Of Christians, a higher obedience is required,—a more spiritual devotion to the will of God; and this higher obedience is enforced by more elevated sanctions. Christians are free from the Divine imposition of external observances, and therefore from all divinely appointed external penalties. They are to worship in spirit and in truth; to yield the obedience of the heart; and all their outward manifestations of devotion are of human appointment;—salutary, no doubt, and even necessary to the maintenance of piety, but still optional, possessing only a derived value, and in their very nature incapable of being made atonement for sin. Spiritual atonement, *i. e.* repentance, is the only atonement which the Gospel prescribes or supposes possible for

spiritual guilt. Reparation indeed is to be made by the guilty to the injured person, when the case admits of it; but this reparation does not constitute the atonement, nor does it partake of the nature of penance. It is only an external atonement for an external injury, and is an evidence that the spiritual atonement,—repentance, has been already made. It bears a relation to that class of offences only which immediately respects our fellow-men, and is impracticable in cases where the offence is against God and ourselves. In such cases, external penance bears no other relation to the offence than such as the weak will of man has originated;—a relation arbitrary, unsanctioned by God, and therefore perilous to man.

This relation, being thus arbitrary, fails of the object for which it was established. Their belief in the efficacy of penance is thus stated by Catholics. (We copy from the universally accredited work, entitled 'Roman Catholic Principles in reference to God and the King,' first published in 1680, and ever since acknowledged as a faithful exposition.) 'Though no creature whatsoever can make condign satisfaction, either for the guilt of sin, or the pain eternal due to it, this satisfaction being proper

to Christ our Saviour only, yet penitent sinners, redeemed by Christ, may, as members of Christ, in some measure satisfy by prayer, fasting, alms-deeds, and other works of piety, for the temporal pain which, in the order of Divine justice sometimes remains due, after the guilt of sin and pains eternal have been remitted. Such penitential works are, notwithstanding, no otherwise satisfactory than as joined and applied to that satisfaction which Jesus made upon the cross, in virtue of which alone all our good works find a grateful acceptance in the sight of God.'

As we have already stated our opinion respecting the nature of the sacrifice of Christ, we have only to inquire, in our examination of this passage, into the meaning of the words *temporal pain.* If they be intended to signify the natural evil consequences of sin in this world, it is clear that no penance of human institution can avert them; since the very efficacy of this penance would prove these consequences not to be natural but arbitrary. A man who has defrauded his neighbor cannot preserve or recover his character for honesty, or secure the confidence of those around him 'by prayer, fasting, almsdeeds, or other works

of piety.' The means are not adapted to the end. The method he must pursue, and the only one which can be used with effect, is to restore that which he had unjustly obtained, and to persevere in a course of integrity till the rectitude of his motives becomes unquestionable. If in the meanwhile he employs prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds as means of rousing his highest affections and confirming his virtuous resolutions, he may find them so far efficacious; but the removal of the *temporal pain*, the stain upon his reputation, is not ascribable to them, but is the consequence of his well attested repentance.

But it appears doubtful whether we have rightly interpreted the words *temporal pain*; since the being obnoxious to this pain is one of the qualifications for the discipline of purgatory. We wish that an exact account could be obtained of its real nature: though, be it what it may, it is clear to us that no natural penalty can be averted by so arbitrary an institution as that of penance. The clause on indulgences is as follows. We quote the doctrinal part of it, that we may avoid the danger, of which it warns us, of charging on the Church such abuses or mistakes as have been sometimes

committed in point of granting and gaining indulgences, through the remissness or ignorance of individuals.

'The guilt of sin, or pain eternal due to it, is never remitted by what Catholics call indulgences; but only such temporal punishments as remain due after the guilt is remitted: these indulgences being nothing else than a mitigation or relaxation, upon just causes, of canonical penances, enjoined by the pastors of the Church on penitent sinners, according to their several degrees of demerit.'

Our conviction of the absolute inefficacy of canonical penances to obtain the end for which they are practised having been stated, we proceed to consider the legitimacy of the power by which such acts are imposed, and a remission from them granted. We shall ground our arguments on some of the subordinate principles, which are clearly deducible from the primary principles of doctrine and morals which we have already stated and arranged.

One of these principles, whose claim to admission is seldom unequivocally denied in theory, though too often practically disallowed, is Christian Liberty,—the indefeasible right of every man to freedom from all human control

in spiritual concerns. This comprehends the right of entire privacy of conscience, of exemption from all inquiry and interference in spiritual matters, of examining, interpreting, comparing and understanding the sacred records under a responsibility to none but God; and of forming, changing, and announcing opinions without hinderance or molestation. We are aware that this principle is seldom carried out to its utmost length, even in speculation; and as seldom is it absolutely rejected. But, as we have said with respect to another principle, and as we would say of all, let it be put to the test of reason and experience; and if sound, let it be fully admitted with all its consequences; if unsound, let it be discarded. The process of attestation which we have instituted obliges us to receive it unhesitatingly, and to act on it unreservedly.

The primary spiritual relation of men is to God; their highest subordinate relation is to each other. Their conduct in the subordinate relation is to be regulated by a regard to the primary; but the primary relation is not to be invaded by any influences from below. The relations between man and man are established by God and guided by Him to the fulfilment

of purposes known only to Him, except in so far as it has pleased Him to reveal them. The relation of the mind of man to its Maker is, on the contrary, so intimate as to admit of no intervention; and of a nature which cannot be affected by any influence whatever. This relation may be unperceived; (though there is perhaps no instance on record of its being so) it may be heedlessly forgotten; it may be, as alas! it too often is, obscured by the shades of vice or the influences of spiritual tyranny; but it can never be usurped or changed; and the time must come when this indissoluble relation shall be recognized and claimed as comprehending all the manifold privileges of existence. The course of nature seems designed to lead men to its perception, and the grand object of revelation is to blazon it forth; while every intimation of its nature describes it as sacred from all invasion. Every manifestation of the Divine will must, therefore, be made to each individual mind as exclusively as if no other mind existed. The religion of nature, though adopted in various countries, and amidst its different aspects among different nations, embraced by myriads under every form, is yet a bond between God and every individual man

as complete as if that man alone had been created. In like manner the Gospel is a covenant between God and the human race only as it is a covenant between God and every individual of that race who shall embrace it: and there can be two parties only to the transaction,—he who offers the conditions, and he who accepts or rejects them. To no one has the Author of this covenant deputed the power of imposing the conditions, or of judging how far they have been fulfilled, or of passing sentence accordingly. To none could he depute this power without making him, in fact, the only person with whom the inferior party has to do, *i. e.* the God of the inferior party. It may be objected that we argue upon a metaphor; but, let the Gospel be regarded under every possible aspect, the same truth will still be demonstrable, —that between the Creator and the created no created power can, without the Divine concurrence, interfere; and that in the spiritual creation, the powers requisite for interference being above those of humanity, such concurrence never can have been, and never can be granted.

If the nature of Christian obedience had been different,—if it had been ritual instead of spir-

itual, it may be conceived possible that God might have committed to man the power of judging and sentencing; but the things of the heart, the desires, the struggles with temptation, the silent conflicts, the unapparent defeats and victories of conscience, are known and can be known by none but God. Through the medium of confession alone can one man gain any insight into the spiritual state of another; and no medium can be more deceptive. It is perhaps impossible for the most conscientious mind to communicate to the most congenial fellow-mind a faithful detail of the thoughts, wishes, hopes, and fears of any single hour; and if it were possible, the fellow-mind would still be incapable of forming an estimate of the spiritual state, or of directing the necessary discipline; because the apparent results of operations which he does not understand are all the materials that he has to judge from; whereas the object of discipline is to rectify the operations themselves. If a man confesses to his bosom friend that his devotional feelings have been for some time past sensibly weakening; that he looks on the beautiful world of nature with apathy, and thinks on the perpetual presence of God without awe or delight; that his spirit is dead

in the public offices of devotion, and roving when it ought to be fixed in prayer; his friend may mourn with him over so painful an experience, and suggest, more or less wisely, methods of arousing the sleeping faculties, and kindling anew the failing fires of devotion. But he does this as an adviser, and not as a judge; for the power of judging is not given to him. He knows not whether the origin of the distemper be bodily or mental: he knows nothing of the thousand influences, from within and from without, which have of late modified the delicate processes of the intellect and the soul. He cannot therefore know what restorative influences are most needed; whether mute converse with nature or busy intercourse with men; whether the terrifying or the alluring appeals of the Gospel; whether the awful claims of the Divine holiness, or the mild persuasions of the Divine compassion; whether any or all of these, or of the manifold influences besides which are perpetually dispensed by Him who knoweth our frame, but have never been confided to the empirical disposal of man.

If, as is evidently the case, all human judgment of sin and holiness is comparative instead of positive, and therefore ever changing as the

means of comparison become more ample and the faculty stronger, it is manifestly impossible for any one mind to form an exact estimate of the qualities of another by any but its own imperfect and varying measure: and since to God alone are the principles of morals present in their complete development, to Him alone can their infallible application belong. The agency of men on each other is appointed accordingly. They may confess their sins one to another for their mutual relief and guidance; but such confession must be strictly voluntary, and carefully disconnected with all inclination towards spiritual usurpation on the one hand and subservience on the other.

There is no subject on which the sacred writers are more explicit than this, and none on which their practice exhibited a more eloquent commentary. Hear what the Apostle of the Gentiles asserts in defence of the spiritual liberty of the least enlightened members of the Church, who were, as he believed, in error respecting some modes of practice which were very important at that time. 'Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye; but not for doubtful disputings. One believeth that he may eat all things; but another who is weak eateth herbs

only. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? To his own master he standeth or falleth. But he shall be established, for God is able to establish him. It is written, 'As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more.' (Romans xiv.) This was the rule which the Apostle observed in all his transactions with the infant churches which referred their spiritual concerns to him, as their father and guardian in the faith. He denounced guilt, expounded the faith, guarded against error, and used every method of argument, persuasion, and entreaty, with which his head and heart could furnish him to establish them in righteousness; he set before them every motive of hope and fear, and faithfully declared the whole counsel of God, as bound by his office, and privileged by his unequalled qualifications; but he throughout abstained from intermeddling with any man's conscience, not only by direct interference, but by indirect influence.

Let us see how scrupulous was his regard to liberty of conscience. 'I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything by which thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God.' (Romans xiv.) A yet more eminent example is on record, whose conduct bears a reference to a case of still more awful responsibility than that instanced by the Apostle. 'If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. (John xii. 47—49.) How, in the face of these declarations, can men impeach the faith and pronounce sentence on the practice of their brethren, assuming

their own judgments as the standard of truth, and their own conceptions as the measure of holiness? How, in the face of these declarations, can ministers of the Gospel have ever grasped, as a right, the power which Christ himself disclaimed; not leaving judgment till the last day, but delivering over to reproach and death those who were 'weak in the faith,' or perplexed with 'doubtful disputations'? How, in the face of these declarations, can priests of any church have denied that to his own master every man stands or falls, and have made close inquisition into the secrets of the soul, pretending to understand its errors, and presumptously undertaking to cleanse its secret faults by methods which no voice from above has sanctioned as lawful, and no sign from on high has shown to be efficacious? Could such inquisitors and such priests (and they are to be found in every Church) have mingled with the followers of Jesus, they would have cried out for fire from heaven on the Samaritans, notwithstanding every prohibition; they would have questioned the sinful Mary, not satisfied with her loving much, till they had ascertained how much; they would have pronounced the young lawyer very far from the kingdom of God unless he

could have made a fuller profession of faith; and, meeting the adulteress in the outer courts of the temple as she left the mild presence of Jesus, would have prescribed her penance with a rigor well pleasing to the accusers, who were themselves too modest to cast the first stone. Since Jesus, who knew what was in the hearts of those around him, forbore to condemn, much more ought they to forbear who have no such knowledge. If he awarded no punishment to those who rejected the Gospel he understood so well, much less should they who are themselves but learners inflict pain of body or mind on their fellow-disciples who understand differently, or the unbelievers who cannot understand at all. If he who spake as his Father commanded him left it to the Father to enforce these commands, it ill becomes those on whom the Spirit has not descended to assume an authority which inspiration itself could not sanction. It becomes them to learn what they themselves are, before they judge how little their brethren are what they ought to be. It becomes them to ascertain their own superiority over the Apostles, before they claim an authority with which no Apostle ever believed himself to be invested; and which, if he had so

imagined, he would have prayed for permission to resign. Far less perilous, far less burdensome would be a commission from on high to guide the seasons, to dispense showers and sunshine, and regulate the produce of the fields, than to control the spiritual movements, and administer the fertilizing influences under which the fruits of holiness are to spring up unto everlasting life.

That any such commission was ever given, is as true in the one case as in the other; and the belief of any individual that to himself it was ever confided, is a proof of unsoundness in heart or brain. To any man it is honor enough, as it was to Paul and Apollos, to plant and to water. To God alone it belongs to give and to measure the increase.

We therefore disapprove of the practice of confession as adopted by Catholics, for one reason among many, that it infringes liberty of conscience, by making man practically accountable to man, and countenancing an assumption of that power to judge and punish which belongs to God alone. The punishments of canonical penances are, it is true, of human institution; but they are awarded to spiritual guilt, of which no one has a right to take

cognizance but God. We therefore deny the right of any man to impose penances, or, in consequence, to issue indulgences; and we hold that wherever such a right is claimed, the prerogative of God is invaded and the cause of his Gospel injured.

Christian liberty secures to every man the right, not only of reading the sacred records for himself, but of interpreting them for himself; of ascertaining by his own unbiassed judgment what they teach, and of holding the opinions thus formed without being accountble to any man or to any body of men. In advocating the free perusal of the Scriptures and the formation of individual opinions from them, we shall be careful to avoid any bias from the popular and false impression, that the faithful pastors of the Catholic Church would prohibit their flocks from reading the Bible: and we shall enter on no discussion respecting the comparative fidelity of Catholic and Protestant English translations of the Scriptures. On the latter point, much must be said, if anything; so much, that no room would be left us for matters of greater importance. Important as it is that the sacred books should be faithfully rendered, that it should be shown how long-prevalent errors, supposed to

be countenanced by them, are not so countenanced; important as it is, for instance, to decide whether the sacred teacher said 'Repent,' or 'Do penance,' it is yet more important to develope the principles to which all modes of expression are subservient: to attend to the spirit rather than the letter, to establish truths and explode errors to the perception of which every intellect is adequate, than to debate matters to which, though of inferior moment, peculiar qualifications are requisite.

We willingly accept the following testimony of Fenelon to the fact of the unrestricted use of the sacred writings in the early times of Christianity; though we dissent from the concluding remark. The passage is translated from a letter from Fenelon to the Bishop of Arras. (*Œuvres Spirituels de Fenelon*, 8vo. tom. 4, p. 241.) 'I think that much trouble has been taken in our times very unnecessarily, to prove what is incontestible, than in the first ages of the Church the laity read the Holy Scriptures. It is clear as daylight, that all people read the Bible and service in their native languages; that as a part of good education, children were made to read them; that in their sermons, the ministers of the Church

regularly explained to their flocks whole books of the sacred volume; that the sacred text of the Scriptures was very familiar to the people; that the clergy exhorted the people to read them; that the clergy blamed the people for not reading them, and considered the neglect of the perusal of them as a source of heresy and immorality. But in all this the Church used a wise economy; adapting the general practice to the circumstances and wants of individuals. It did not, however, think that a person could not be a Christian, or not be well instructed in his religion, without perusing the sacred writings. Whole countries of barbarians, innumerable multitudes of the faithful were rich (to use the words of St Paul) in words and science, though they had not read the sacred writings. To listen to the pastors of the Church who explain the Scriptures to the faithful and distribute among them such parts as are suited to their wants, is to read the Scriptures.'

This last proposition is in perfect accordance with the creed which declares that 'to the holy Mother Church it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures,' but inconsistent with the principle held by

us, that no man has the power of judging for another or the right to prescribe the opinions of another. 'What then is to be done,' it is asked, 'with those who cannot read for themselves?' They must take what they can obtain from their pastors, or from any other medium of communication. If the medium be as faithful as human fallibility allows, much truth may be learned and the means of holiness may be abundantly afforded: but yet the learner is precluded by his ignorance from the full enjoyment of his Christian liberty; and to hang on the lips of his instructor is far, very far from being the same thing as reading the Scriptures for himself.

Such a 'wise economy' as Fenelon speaks of seems to us but a fleshly wisdom, a narrow policy originated by men, discountenanced by God, and available to perpetuate, not the Gospel itself, but the corruptions which were early mixed with it, and which will not stand the test of examination. Who was to decide what 'parts were suited to their wants?' Who knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man which is in him? Who gave the power of prohibition to read the Scriptures over such as 'were not disposed to read them to their ad-

vantage?' Who was to judge of the disposition; who could discern the tendency of inquiry; who could estimate the advantage and disadvantage of the results? How dared the Church to 'withhold from the laity the perusal of the Bible without permission of their pastors,' from the assumption that it was 'unsafe to allow the people at large to read the sacred text?' How unsafe? For the Gospel itself? The Divine care would have provided a preventive or a remedy, if the danger had been real. For the honor of God? He would have made provision for its vindication. For the spiritual welfare of the people? It could not have been injured by the free use of the means ordained to perfect it: nor was it ever the province of pastors to promote that welfare by other means than the Gospel authorizes. And where is the patent for the monopoly of the Scriptures to be found? But it is alleged that there are many passages in the sacred volume which, being hard to be understood, are wrested by the unstable and the ignorant to the destruction of the purity of their faith. True. But the case was the same in the days of the Apostles; and did Peter ever desire that Paul's writings should therefore be kept

back from the unlearned and unstable? Or did he enjoin an explanation of them from the wise, to which the foolish should be required to assent? No; he recommended caution in giving heed to other men's errors, and growth in the knowledge of Christ Jesus; both which must be better promoted by independent thought and judgment than by subservience to any mind, however pure and enlightened. Christ himself, though he knew what was in man, never required this subservience from any one of his followers. He gave his instructions in as many different forms as we have them in now: in discourses, in parables, in familiar dialogue, and by actions; and invariably he left to the hearers the application of the principles thus conveyed, except when pressed by his immediate followers for an interpretation. He took no pains to preserve his Gospel from 'the rash criticisms of the vulgar,' as the piety of Fenelon erroneously advises. He did not act upon the belief that previous instruction was necessary to the comprehension of the word of life, or that 'the people should be full of the spirit of the Gospel before they are entrusted with the letter.' The letter of the Gospel now is the same as the letter of

the Gospel then; the spirit now, as then, is only to be got at through the letter; and the letter now, as then, is only valuable as it communicates the spirit. Christ did not think that 'it should only be permitted to the simple, the docile, and the humble; to those who wish to nourish themselves with its divine truths in silence; and withheld from those who merely seek to satisfy their curiosity, to dispute, to dogmatize, to criticize.' This doctrine of Fenelon is, we are told, and ever has been, the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. Were the disciples to whom Christ spoke of the bread of life and who therefore forsook him, 'docile and humble?' Yet what saying was more 'hard to be understood?' When he declared the nature of his Gospel, and the authority under which he proposed it, were the Pharisees in the temple 'simple and docile?' Was there no disposition 'to dispute, to dogmatize, to criticize' among the elders, the scribes, the Sadducees whom he referred to his works, assured of the temporary nature of the Jewish covenant, and besought to listen to the truth which should make them free? The glad tidings of salvation were then preached, as they ought to be now, to the poor and ignorant without fear that what is truly the Gospel can

be dangerously misapprehended, and without intimation that the faith needs the interpretation of fallible understandings, or the guardianship of human wisdom.

If we believed (which we do not) that error in matters of faith could of itself endanger salvation,—*i. e.* exclude from the happiness of a future state,—we should be convinced that those were much more liable to error who adopted the faith after it had passed through a fallible mind, than those who received it from Christ himself, speaking directly, as in fact he does, in the faithful records which the Bible presents. And the more feeble and ignorant the recipient mind, the more liable will it be to admit the errors of others, as well as to originate some of its own. While, if referred to the sacred volume itself for his faith, a man is in danger of entertaining no errors but his own. However imperfect his mental vision may be, he is thus more likely to behold the object in its true form and colors, than by the interposition of a faulty medium. If it be objected that the medium, so far from being faulty, corrects the imperfections of the natural faculty, we ask for the test of its possessing this quality, and for the proof that it was ever conferred.

But, being convinced, for reasons given before, that the possession of the true faith is not an indispensable requisite for future happiness, and that the non-possession of it is not to be followed by eternal misery, or by any arbitrary infliction whatever, we cannot admit the plea of care for the souls of men as any reason or excuse for trenching on the natural liberty of the mind, or prescribing opinions which Christ himself only administered the means of forming, and which his Apostles presumed not to impose. Purity of faith is the most exalted attainment of the most exalted mind,—the richest of the myriads of rich blessings which the Father of our spirits has placed within our reach. It should be sought as the most precious of all treasures; it should be guarded as the most sacred of all trusts: but though it may be won by any, it can be communicated by none. It is the especial reward of individual search, and loses its very nature by being transferred: for that which is truth to a man who has discovered it for himself, can be truth to another man only so far as his faculties are exercised upon it, apprehend, and adopt it. This, which may be justly said of all truth, may be especially declared of religious truth, which is of no value

unless made a vivifying principle, and can never become a vivifying principle unless perceived by the understanding and recognized by the heart.

The true office of the pastors of the Church (and likewise of all believers) is to lead others to that knowledge of the truth which can never be imposed. Their concern for the spiritual welfare of their brethren can never be too earnest; their diligence in guidance and guardianship, too eager; their value for purity of faith, too high; or their apprehension of spiritual danger, too ready or too ardent. But all this concern and apprehension should be justly directed, and this guidance and guardianship exercised with a regard to the rights with which God has invested every man. The first object to be desired is spiritual advancement, to which intellectual rectitude is subsidiary. The first object of dread is moral corruption, and not mental error. The guidance to be exercised is that of an experienced over an inexperienced person. The one points out to the other the snares and dangers into which he is liable to fall, the labyrinth in which he may lose himself, and the various tendencies of different paths; but he has no lawful power to insist up-

on a particular path being pursued, or to condemn his companion to destruction for interpreting differently the invitation on which they both proceed. The guardianship is faithful as long as it consists in warning off the attacks of temptation, declaring the threats and promises of the Gospel, and educating for independent action; but it becomes tyranny when restraints are imposed on the exercise of the faculties, and any impediments are thrown in the way of a free range through the spiritual world of which God has made every man an inhabitant. It is the office of Christian pastors to study the sacred records with all diligence, striving to ascertain by the help of learning and philosophy, and every other help, what the true faith is, and how other minds may be best disposed for its apprehension; to place before those minds whatever may best tend to enlighten, convince, and establish them; to excite them to activity and stimulate them to further action when aroused. But further than this they must not go. The mind must work out the results for itself; and for those results none but itself can be answerable. Its safety or peril rests with God, who hath given into no man's hand the souls of his brethren.

It is justly observed by Catholics, that many of the very persons who complain of the discouragement by them thrown in the way of the general perusal of the Scriptures, circulate the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England 'as a safeguard against the misinterpretation of the Bible,' and by their doubt and dread of the consequences of making the Bible common, seem to admit the probability and danger of such misinterpretation. It is very true that such inconsistencies obtain among Protestants, and such inconsistencies will exist as long as there is any dread of carrying out a good principle to its full extent. If all Protestants adhered to the grand principle of the Reformation, that the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants, there would not only be no damnatory clauses in their creeds, but no creeds,—no embodying in an unchanging form of words principles which were given in no such form, which cannot be received under the same aspect by minds differently prepared, and which are too expansive in their nature to be long confined within arbitrary limits of human imposition. The Church of England forsakes its fundamental principle of dissent from the Roman Catholic Church when it would secure

uniformity of faith by framing articles of faith, by keeping back the Bible from the feeblest intellect, or appointing 'a safeguard,' or interfering in any way between the Bible and the minds which are to derive their religion from it. If uniformity of faith cannot be thus obtained, it is a necessary consequence of the Protestant principle that uniformity of faith is not necessary to salvation. This consequence, which we fully admit, the Church of England, in the letter and spirit of her articles and creeds, inconsistently denies.

It is manifestly absurd to exhort a man to derive his faith from the Bible, if it is declared to him beforehand what he is bound at his eternal peril to believe. Yet this is in fact done, when the Book of common Prayer is circulated as a safeguard to the Bible, and also when a Catholic is made to declare on his admission to the Church, 'I also admit the Sacred Scriptures according to the sense which the holy Mother Church has held and does hold,' &c. For purposes of faith, all use in reading the Bible is over when this declaration is made. The disciple can only, while striving to learn his duty from the sacred pages, wonder at what he finds there;—at the appeals to individual

judgment; at the addresses to the intimate consciousness of every man; at the freedom allowed and encouraged among the first Christians; at the absence of all pretension to authority in matters of opinion, of all wish to prescribe, of all tendency to domineer. If he be intelligent, it will occur to him as surprising that no creed, if creeds be good things, was given by our Saviour to his Apostles before he left them, weak and divided in the faith as they at that time were. And again, when they were strong and united, but when doubt and disagreement were creeping into their churches, it must seem strange that Christ, who manifestly watched over the interests of his Church, should not have authorized and communicated a profession of faith more ample and particular than that which had hitherto accompanied baptism; viz. that Jesus was the Christ, and that remission of sins came by repentance.

Finding no trace of the Apostles' Creed among all the sacred books, he will inquire into its origin, and discover that it was not composed by the Apostles,* and that when, in an evil hour, it was proposed for general adoption,

*See Lord King's 'Critical History of the Apostles' Creed.'

its main purpose was to exclude the Gnostics, who would have mixed up their false philosophy and vain deceits with the simple faith in Christ which then, as now, constituted a man a Christian. Having gone thus far, the disciple begins to doubt whether he has hitherto possessed and exercised the spiritual liberty which is his birthright. If he pursue the inquiry he will, undoubtedly cast off the restraints which man's wisdom has imposed on his faculties, and interpret, judge, and believe for himself. If he look back to his promise to admit the sense of Scripture only as the Church declares it, and renews that promise, he must lay aside every hope of purifying and strengthening his faith by his scriptural studies. Henceforth it will indeed be, as Fenelon declares, the same thing to him to read the words of Christ, and to hear an explanation of them from his pastor. Not for this were the Beræans cited as an example by Paul; not by these means was Timothy prepared for his extensive labors; not thus did Apollos learn how to apply his vigorous talents to the service of the infant churches. All these men searched the Scriptures, knew the Scriptures from their youth up, were learned in the Scriptures, from which they ascertained for themselves the promise of Christ's coming, and

themselves applied the tests which proved that Jesus of Nazareth was this Christ.

Every man has a natural right, not only to form his opinions for himself, but to change them as frequently as he shall believe himself led to do so. This natural right is not only sanctioned, but its exercise is approved, by the Gospel. As long as the opinions of men are not absolutely right, as long as they fall short of the truth as it will be perceived in heaven, there is room and occasion for a change; and such a change, wherever recorded in the New Testament, is recorded with approbation. Where was there ever a more extensive change of opinion than in Apollos on his conversion? Yet in his youth, Apollos was as orthodox, as undoubtedly correct in his religious opinions before the introduction of Christianity, as any Christian who now subscribes all the creeds of the Catholic Church. But what would have been the consequence if he had engaged never to 'take and interpret the Scriptures otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the' Rabbis; or if he had promised, vowed, and sworn most constantly to profess his present faith whole and entire, with God's assistance, to the end of his life? It is true that no reve-

lation is likely to supersede the faith of Christians; but it is, at the same time, as little probable that no developement of the principles of Christianity should cause gradual changes of opinion in the course of a lifetime, as it then was that Judaism should not be expanded into the fuller revelation of the Gospel. If, like Apollos, we believe rightly now, it is impossible to answer for no change of opinion being necessary to enable us to believe rightly twenty years hence. The view which we have already taken of the expansive tendency of the eternal principles of Christianity authorizes our declaring that a gradual enlargement of views, *i.e.* change of opinions, is a necessary consequence of the correct apprehension of religious truth.

Creeds are intended to be permanent and universal professions of faith; and are the instrument by which a uniformity of faith is to be secured, if such a thing be yet possible. But creeds never have fulfilled, and never can fulfil, any one of these purposes. No uniformity of faith has existed since the first creed was framed; no one formulary has been universally received among Christians; and experience already indicates, what the lapse of time will

prove,—that no creed will be permanent. If the most ancient of creeds, commonly called the Apostles', be named in answer to the last remark, let it be remembered that the first version of this formulary given by Irenæus, and the subsequent ones by Tertullian, Cyril of Alexandria, and others, were as widely different from those now in use as from each other. Widely different versions of this creed are used in the Catholic Church and the Church of England; and those who subscribe to the same form of words understand those words variously. The permanence of this most ancient of creeds is in name only; and the name itself is a false assumption.

Creeds cannot be permanent and universal, unless the language of which they consist is also permanent and universal; which no language has ever been. There is no test by which it can be proved that any two minds affix precisely the same meaning to the commonest terms; while we have abundant evidence that very abstract terms (such as abound in creeds) convey very different notions to different minds. Thus, if the terms of a language were absolutely immutable, and if one language prevailed over the whole earth, there would

still be room for a variety of interpretations of anything expressed in that language. But the mutations which time occasions in every tongue, and the necessity of translation and re-translation, increase a thousandfold the chances of such a variety, and indeed render it absolutely unavoidable.

It is well, therefore, that the truths of religious doctrine cannot be made one with the language in which any age or nation chooses to clothe them, as that language is necessarily mutable. And it would be well if believers were henceforth and for ever to desist from the attempt to connect what is mutable with what is immutable, that which is perishable with that which is immortal, by requiring the present age to adopt the language of the past, and providing for a similar adoption by the future. If they wish the spiritual *conceptions* of former ages to be perpetuated, this may best be done by changing the *terms* as their meanings become modified, and not by retaining them the more pertinaciously, the more varied are the conceptions they originate. If the Gospel itself had been inseparably connected with any form of language, or embodied in anything but facts, it would ere now have passed away, or have been so far transformed

as to be a different religion. It would have been untranslateable; it would have been untransferrable to any country beyond that in which it originated; it would have been unintelligible to succeeding generations of even native inhabitants of that country. It is only in so far as Christianity is disencumbered of formularies of faith, and emancipated from the guardianship of Councils, that it becomes the religion of mankind. The metaphysical clauses of the Apostles' Creed, and the canons of the Council of Trent, may contain the belief of a few, a very few, speculative minds. The declaration that God sent Christ Jesus into the world to save sinners, contains the substantial belief of Christendom, which will be the faith of the whole world,—because it is Christianity.

It is as impossible for a man to prescribe to himself the faith of his future years, as for one age to prescribe the faith of a succeeding age: and for the same reasons. He may in his youth state an opinion in unambiguous terms, and with perfect sincerity, which, if he still hold, he cannot state in the same terms ten years after. The opinion may be substantially the same, and yet have such a bearing upon

some other opinion, or may be so modified by some other opinion that the same form of words may not express it fully, or perhaps correctly. It is yet more probable that the conceptions which are now attached to the terms are enlarged by his improved experience; so that, if he would declare the same truth, he must change his terms; or if he can conscientiously retain the terms, he must have modified his opinion. What enlightened, reflecting Christian understands exactly the same by any one parable, any one axiom, any one fact of Scripture that he did when he first admitted its truth? He believed it then; he believes it now; but how differently since science has brought new evidence to light, since philosophy has developed its origin and tendencies, since experience has tested its truth, and faith invested it with a hallowed interest and an indestructible beauty! How, therefore, is it possible for any one faithfully to engage that his views even of eternal truth shall never be modified! Witnessing, as every reflecting man does, the gradual evolution of truth from the vicissitudes of human experience, and from the successive dispensations and the progressive course of Providence, he may with safety declare that Gospel

truth is immutable and divine; but he will avoid the presumption of supposing that all her riches are already shed into his bosom, that her brightest light is poured upon his feeble eye. He will rather hope that his apprehension will continually become clearer, his powers invigorated, and his capacities enlarged, till his views of religious truth become as unlike what they were when first admitted, as the fair face of nature appears to the new-born infant and to the mighty poet. He will reject, as an infringement of his inalienable rights, every attempt to bind him down to engagements which it may not be in his power to fulfil. He will refuse to promise that his intellect shall remain stationary; and to permit that any individual, any council, or any church, shall usurp that spiritual influence which he trusts shall be immediately dispensed from the fountain of grace and truth. Desiring wisdom, he asks of God; not profaning and annulling his prayer by engaging to receive it only in certain measure; and if any church on earth interfere to prescribe the measure, he rejects the interference as unauthorized by the letter of the Gospel and condemned by its spirit.

Christian liberty comprehends an entire free-

dom from restraint in the publication of opinions. To his own master every man standeth or falleth, not only in the formation of his opinions, but in the use he makes of them when formed. According to his conscientiousness in seeking for truth, and not according to the accuracy of his judgment, will he be judged by God in forming his opinions; and when formed, he will be responsible, not for the rectitude of his influence, but for the rectitude of his intentions in exerting it. What a man believes to be the truth, it is his duty to declare in the method and degree which benevolence and prudence may point out to be the best. For what but this do we venerate the heroic Stephen, and every other martyr who bore witness to the truth in the early days of Christianity? Yet for what but this have Christians been led to the stake by Christians, age after age, under the pretended sanction of a religion of liberty and brotherly love? For what but this have Catholics and Protestants vied with each other in torturing in body and mind men whose conscience was omnipotent over the love of liberty and life, and who thus showed that, whether their intellects were or were not unfaithful, their souls were true to God? For

what but this are the lovers of truth even yet too often punished, directly or indirectly, for inviting others to participate in the benefits which they believe they have gained. Stephen was stoned because he was a heretic; Paul worshiped the God of his fathers according to a way which was then called heresy, and for which he was persecuted through life and unto death. Peter and John were brought before the high priest and rulers for publishing their heresy, and punished for refusing to cease to publish it. Yet has this their heresy prevailed; and thus shall every new truth prevail, and its promulgators be honored, in despite of the wrath of man; while the more freely errors are canvassed, the sooner will they be exposed. What was once said with truth in relation to the Gospel of truth,—'If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it,'—may be said with equal wisdom of every other kind of truth and the test of investigation is a much surer one than that which is furnished by the prejudices and the passions of men. There is no natural, no Divine law which sanctions the infliction of pain for the exercise of the intellect, or for

communicating the results of that exercise; and that any human law or custom should have existed by which injury of mind, body, or estate is made the consequence of the formation and publication of opinions, is a proof that the natural rights of man have not been understood, and that the spirit of Christian liberty has not pervaded Cristian society. As long as reproach is attached to the act of promulgating opinions (independent of the manner,) as long as the holder of opinions is treated with the same reprobation as the opinions themselves, as long as he is prospectively consigned over to perdition as they are to detestation, as long as ideas of merit and demerit are associated with the convictions of the understanding, or blame is attached to the act of making those convictions known, not only will the subordinate principles of the Gospel remain in part unrecognized, but its essential principles will be violated; for it is clearly a duty of piety to reveal all that is believed to have been discovered of the works and ways of God;—and of benevolence to communicate what, being conceived to be truth, is conceived to be intended for the universal benefit of the race.

It may excite surprise that we have not here

examined the claim of the Holy Catholic Church to spiritual supremacy: but it will better accord with our plan to take that claim into consideration while treating of the temporary institutions of Christianity.

From the essential principles of the Gospel we derive our belief that Christianity, is not designed for any union, permanent or temporary, with wordly power and grandeur; that it is incapable of such a connexion; being injured instead of confirmed by the support of temporal authority, and impaired instead of adorned by the adjuncts of worldly pomp. This principle is asserted in words by every Christian Church in existence; but violated, in fact, by almost as many. Christianity is acknowledged to be a religion of poverty of spirit, of self-denial, of looseness from the world and its possessions. If this principle were carried out into each individual case, it is plain that the pomp and ambition which have despoiled the Gospel of its purity could no longer exist. It is remarkable that this poverty and self-denial are most insisted on in those Churches where the temporal power and luxury are the most excessive. We hear of them above all from Catholics, whose popes, cardinals, and bish-

ops have, in every age, exceeded all temporal princes in the enjoyment of splendor and luxury. We hear of them from the Church of England, whose superior officers revel in unbounded wealth, and especially prize the connexion with the State which their office occasions. While we Unitarians, who hold that Christianity is of a purely spiritual nature, and therefore dishonored by the pretended support of powers inferior to its own, insist much less earnestly than the Catholic Church on the duty of self-mortification and voluntary poverty. Our Church, were it as extensive as the Catholic, would contain no ecclesiastical princes, and no friars; no potentates clothed in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously every day from the revenues of the Church, and no believers whose piety is testified by a vow of poverty. We believe that our religion ought to be exerted in controling the passions, exalting the desires, and equalizing the affections, not so much by regulating the external manifestations of those passions and desires, as by influencing the heart. Self-denial is taught much better by inspiring the love of our neighbor, than by the prohibition of innocent comforts and pleasures. Spirituality is much bet-

ter taught by making spiritual things the objects of supreme desire, than by commanding an ostentatious avoidance of the enjoyments of life. But while the Gospel thus leaves men free to follow the bent of innocent desires,—to decide, each for himself, what is lawful and expedient,—it lays a powerful restraint on all the passions, and curbs all propensities which are inconsistent with its purity and spirituality. All worldly ambition, all selfish luxury are utterly incompatible with the faith of the Gospel, which disallows every claim founded on itself to distinctions of rank, to abundance of wealth, to power over the possessions of other men, to the indulgence of earthly desires. The Gospel affords no sanction to the accumulation of wealth, or to the assumption of authority. It affords examples, on the contrary, of submission to temporal authority, of the endurance of voluntary poverty in hardship, not because poverty and hardship are in themselves spiritually desirable, but because they were necessary to the attainment of some benevolent end. From the Gospel we learn that Jesus utterly disclaimed all pretensions to authority, except in those matters where his authority was supreme. 'Who made me a judge or a divider over you?' was

his remonstrance with those who referred the disposal of an inheritance to him: and his reply respecting the lawfulness of paying tribute was such as ought to have obviated all doubt whether temporal and spiritual power could ever be properly united; 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' What could be meant by the declaration 'My kingdom is not of this world,' but that his authority was of a spiritual nature only? Why did he strenuously oppose every attempt to make him a king? Why did he send forth the seventy disciples without gold and silver and changes of raiment? Why did he recommend to the rich man to sell his possessions, if wealth and power can be made the means of serving the interests of the Gospel? Why was his indignation so perpetually roused by the spiritual assumptions of the Pharisees, but because religion was in them disgraced by its connexion with worldly greatness? Yet not a few Christians have loved the chief seats in public assemblies, and homage in the streets; not a few have made proclamation when they dispensed their alms, and prayed in the high ways; not a few have taken on themselves to appoint places in the Messiah's kingdom which

the Messiah himself refused to promise, because such power belonged to God alone. While he declined all interference in matters of temporal concern, and rejected all support to his Gospel from magisterial authority, and all benefit from the resources of wealth, it is clear that such support must ever be needless and such resources unhallowed.

How does it happen, it is perpetually asked, that while the right to temporal power is abjured in words by every Church, the State religion of every country affords an instance of its assumption? It happens, as many other strange and inconsistent things happen, through the misuse of terms. What we call temporal power, the advocates of a State religion call spiritual power; and thus have all ecclesiastical abuses been justified from the day that ecclesiastical domination was established. By spiritual authority have kings been enthroned and deposed; by spiritual authority have tributes been raised, wars been originated and conducted, properties been confiscated, and lives forfeited! By spiritual authority were the Crusades begun and carried on; by spiritual authority have popes divided and distributed kingdoms, have cardinals negotiated and

priests intrigued! By spiritual authority did Wolsey amass his treasures,and rule his sovereign at home, and the agents of his sovereign abroad! By spiritual authority does the Church of England demand tithes, and under the same sanction do her bishops legislate. What then is temporal power? What are worldly pomp and wealth?

The abuses which have deformed every State religion in turn are evident to all,—even to those who still help to support them; but the origin of those abuses is not generally ascertained. We ascribe them to the error of mixing up the permanent principles of Christianity with its temporary institutions.

Spiritual principles can only be recognized by means of external manifestations; but the principles and the manifestation are not the same thing; nor can they have a lasting connexion, as every thing external is mutable, while the principles of truth are immutable. As long as mind is connected with body, as long as the intellect can only be reached through the senses, and the heart through the intellect, truth must be invested with a form, and realities be accompanied by shadows. But that form is changeable, and those shadows are

fleeting: the proximate cause of which is the constitution of all material things; and the final cause, the ultimate universal recognition of the principles of truth. We have already described how these principles were communicated to the Israelites by means of ordinances which the mind of man has long since outgrown. The principles of Christianity were, in like manner, embodied in institutions, some of which are obsolete, while others remain; but, since Christianity is destined not to be superseded by any other scheme, it appears to follow necessarily from the principles on which we have been reasoning, that none of its institutions were, like the Jewish, positive, but avowedly adopted from motives of expediency. It is therefore the belief of a portion of the Unitarian body, that Christ himself appointed no ordinance for permanent adoption, and that those which were appointed by the Apostles, and sanctioned by their practice, were established on the ground of expediency alone. They were not therefore the less obligatory upon their disciples in those times, nor upon us, as far as the original ground of the ordinances remains; but as some apostolic practices have, through the revolutions of hu-

man affairs, become obsolete, it is desirable to to search into the foundation of all.

Baptism cannot be called a Christian institution, since the rite was practised long before the mission of the Baptist; but some of our body adopt it as a Christian ordinance, because it was countenanced by Jesus and administered by his followers: while other Unitarians, deeming the practice of baptism inexpedient in their circumstances of age and country, decline the rite themselves, but recommend its use in cases analogous to those in which it was first adopted, i. e. in cases of conversion from Paganism. There are others who wish to abolish it altogether, from a fear of encouraging superstition by an ungrounded attachment to external observances.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is considered a positive institution of Christianity by almost the whole of the Christian world, the great majority of Unitarians included. The Society of Friends, and the Free-thinking Christians, are perhaps the only sects who positively decline, from principle, the practice of the rite; while some Unitarians deem it inconsistent with their principles to believe that Christ designed the ordinance for permanent

and universal adoption. It is practised by many as a means, a very important means, of increasing love and exciting to obedience, while they yet cannot plead a Divine sanction in its favor, or much less suppose that any peculiar quality resides in what is eaten and drank, or any peculiar virtue in the act of eating and drinking by which any peculiar privilege can be attained. In these last suppositions all our body are agreed, since no intimation can be found in the Scriptures that the sacramental bread and wine were at any time used otherwise than as merely emblematical of the sacrifice of Christ. It was the practice of the early Christians to assemble for the supper, each carrying his portion of the feast, which was eaten like any other feast, and frequently with excess on the part of the rich, while his poorer neighbor hungered. 'When ye come together,' says the Apostle (1 Cor. xi. 20—23,), it is not to eat the Lord's Supper; for in eating, every one taketh before another his own supper, and one is hungry and another is drunken. What? Have ye not houses to eat and drink in? Or despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not?' (v. 33.) 'Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come

together to eat, wait one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation.'—It is not conceivable that these Christians had any notion that what they ate and drank was in itself sacred, or that the Apostle was aware of any other purpose of the rite but that of 'showing forth the Lord's death till he came.'

This rite was usually practised on the first day of the week, when the disciples met to commemorate the resurrection of their Lord, and to worship together. The custom of meeting on a stated day for worship has been continued ever since; and the day has been wisely set apart for purposes of rest and refreshment to body and mind. An institution so simple for purposes so salutary will probably, however abused, be of very long standing, even after it is more generally allowed than at present not to be a Divine appointment. The Jewish Sabbath was a Divine ordinance for the use of the Jews; and by them alone has the last day of the week been regarded as sacred. The Lord's Day, or, as it sometimes called, the Christian Sabbath, is a totally different institution, and one which is professedly arbitrary, though subservient to very important objects. If the Jews

were encouraged by their Messiah to look to the final purposes of their sabbatical institution, much more ought we, the subjects of a more enlarged dispensation, to bear in mind that all external observances are but means to ends; ordinances of which it is certain that they were made for man, and not man for them.

Whatever may be the diversity of opinion among Unitarians respecting the ground of the three ordinances just referred to, there is none with regard to those institutions whose period appears to have been determined at the moment of their origin.

The institution of Apostolic Ordination, which the Roman Catholic Church holds to be of a permanent nature, we believe not to have been designed to outlive the Apostles. We perceive no intimation in the various instructions given them which can lead us to imagine that their office was intended to be or could be bequeathed. They were chosen to be witnesses of the circumstances of the life and death of Christ, and the depositaries of miraculous powers after his ascension; but as the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that is the power conferred from on high, was only a temporary sanction, the peculiar office with which it was con-

nected could also be only temporary. The evidence which we possess on this very important subject consists of the words of Christ himself, addressed to his Apostles respecting their mission, their own incidental observations, and the facts which ecclesiastical history presents. From all these sources of evidence we derive our belief that the office of *witnessing*, which is absolutely untransferrable, was the peculiar office of the twelve Apostles; that they were especially qualified by it for the task of preaching and establishing the new Gospel, and that to enable them to do so with sufficient effect, among the many and great difficulties which the state of the world then presented, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were granted to them, with power to impart them to whomsoever they would, and that this miraculous power was coexistent with the apostolic age,—with what is variously called 'the age,' 'the kingdom of God,' 'the kingdom of Christ,' 'the kingdom of heaven;' that is, from the descent of the Holy Spirit to the abolition of Judaism on the overthrow of Jerusalem. We find no evidence of miracles after that time which is at all to be compared with that on which we rely respecting the apostolic gifts; none which

allows us to hesitate in our opinion, that with the apostles expired the power of communicating miraculous privileges; and that on them alone were such privileges immediately conferred. These gifts of the Spirit served as a Divine sanction to their testimony, and were therefore coexistent with that testimony; and the same evidence which recorded their testimony after their death, recorded the Divine sanction likewise; and upon this broad and immutable foundation is built the Christian faith, against which, according to the Saviour's promise, no opposition has prevailed or can prevail. When some who could not deny the peculiarity of his mission, but would not admit his pre-eminent claims, supposed him to be John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or another of the prophets, Simon Peter, who was not blinded by prejudice, and who believed for the works' sake in opposition to the opinions of men, boldly declared him to be 'the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus pronounced him blessed, because he believed what the power of God made manifest, and not what men declared; and promised that on such testimony as his should the Gospel be established, so that no opposition should pre-

vail against it; and further declared that it should be in the power of Peter to admit men into the privileges of the Gospel, and to have extensive influence over their spiritual state. 'Blessed art thou, Simon; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee that thou art Peter (a rock,) and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of death shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' This promise was fulfilled. Peter bore testimony far and wide, with all the zeal and energy by which he was characterized, to the life, teachings and death of his divine master; and from this testimony, in conjunction with that of his brethren, is derived the evidence on which Christianity is received to this day. Peter had also preeminent power in the infant Church, converting three thousand persons on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards preaching, baptizing, and adding multitudes to those who were pressing into the kingdom of God.

No record exists of any attempt on his part

to delegate any portion of his power; none of which could be transferred but such authority in the Church as he possessed under the mode of church government which then subsisted. That which constituted the chief glory of the Prince of the Apostles belonged to him as the follower of Jesus and as an eminent recipient of the gifts of the Spirit. It appears exceedingly improbable that Peter ever was Bishop of Rome, though he suffered imprisonment and perhaps martyrdom there. The authority of the Apostles was general, and seems to have been exercised generally, instead of being fixed in any one congregation. At all events it is clear that that the Bishops of Rome did not lay claim to any preeminence over the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, (further than as they all claimed precedence of one another on account of the dignity of their several cities, and the superior wealth of their sees,) till the Arian controversy afforded them various opportunities of extending their power. When remonstrances were offered by the sixth Council of Carthage, in A. D. 426, and by many other assemblies, against the encroachments of the Bishops of Rome, the pleas which are now brought for-

ward in support of their claim to supremacy had never been heard of; and they were in fact never adduced till many centuries after the death of Peter. It was not till the beginning of the seventh century that the title of Pope was appropriated by the Bishops of Rome; it being applied to all bishops at first, and afterwards to those who held the larger sees, as when Cornelius, Bishop of Rome; called Cyprian the Pope of Carthage. The assumption of the title of Universal Bishop by John of Constantinople, towards the end of the sixth century, was condemned by Gregory the Great, then Bishop of Rome, as presumption and even blasphemy; and he further showed his sense of the presumption by investing himself with the humbler title of Servus Servorum Dei. Yet so soon after as A. D. 606, Boniface III. obtained of the Emperor Phocas that the Bishops of Rome alone should henceforth call themselves Universal Bishops: the claim being founded on the dignity of the city and the wealth of the see, and not on the transmission of the apostolic office from Peter, of which not the slightest hint appears to have been given till Leo complained that the Council of Chalcedon had granted his claim to preeminence on no better

ground than the importance of the city where he presided. Even he, however, had no thought of advancing pretensions to infallibility, as the successor of an infallible Apostle; this additional claim being reserved for Agatho, who, in 680, brought forward the novel doctrine 'that the chair of Rome—never erred, nor can err in any point;' and that 'all the constitutions of the Roman Church are to be received as if they had been delivered by the divine voice of St Peter.' So that there is an utter absence of proof that 'the Catholic or Universal Church has been visibly continued through all ages in one uniform faith, being guided and preserved from error in matters of faith by the assistance of the Holy Spirit.' On the contrary, there is every kind of evidence to prove that the supernatural influences of the Spirit ceased with the close of the apostolic age; that divisions of various kinds and degrees existed in the Christian Church, over which the Bishops of Rome for five or six centuries exerted no preeminent control, and which the decrees of Councils were of no avail to soothe and unite. We therefore hold apostolic ordination to have been a temporary institution, and at the time more universally

understood to be so than perhaps any other provision for the spread of the Gospel.

Of any such institution as a Church, permanent or temporary, established by Christ, and distinct from the simple exhibition of his Gospel, we find not the most remote hint in any records but those of the vain imaginations of men. *A Church* means literally an assemblage; and the Church of Christ signifies, everywhere in the sacred writings, those who believe in Christ. Where the term is limited, it signifies assemblages of Christians in different places, as the Church at Corinth, the Church at Ephesus, &c. By the universal Church it is impossible to understand any thing but the total number of Christian believers: nor can we conceive of any means by which it can be shown that the primitive Christians understood otherwise, or that the term can admit of any other interpretation. We hold, therefore, that the propositions we are about to quote from the document to which we have before referred ('Roman Catholic Principles,' &c.) are founded on an unauthorized and erroneous conception of the nature of the Christian Church. 'The way or means by which man may arrive at the knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel' are declar-

ed to be 'not by the reading of Scripture, interpreted according to the private judgment of each disjunctive person or nation in particular; but by an attention and submission to the voice of the Catholic or Universal Church, established by Christ for the instruction of all; spread for that end through all nations, and visibly continued in the succession of pastors and people through all ages. From this Church, guided in truth, and secured from error in matters of faith by the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost, every one may learn the right sense of the Scriptures, and such Christian mysteries and duties as are necessary to salvation. This Church, thus established, thus spread, thus continued, thus guided, in one uniform faith and subordination of government, is that which is called the Roman Catholic Church: the qualities just mentioned, unity, indeficiency, visibility, succession, and universality, being evidently applicable to her. From the testimony and authority of this Church it is that we receive the Scriptures, and believe them to be the word of God; and as she can assuredly tell us what particular book is the word of God, so she can, with the like assurance, tell us also the true sense and meaning of it in controverted points

of faith; the same Spirit that wrote the Scriptures, directing her to understand both them and all matters necessary to salvation.'

As we believe ourselves included in the universal Church, *i. e.* in the number of Christian believers, we acknowledge no authority but that which thus included us,—the authority of Christ himself: to no other voice but his, as delivered in Scripture, do we listen with submission; and to none do we commit the office of interpretation; believing that God has given to every man the inalienable right and sufficient power to ascertain for himself what doctrines and duties are necessary to salvation. What the Romish Church may be which, so far from being 'universal' expressly assumes the power of guiding and informing Christian believers, we profess not to understand, having received no evidence of its origin and no attestation of its claims; but we know that in the *Christian Church* there has never been, since the apostolic age, 'one uniform faith and subordination of government;' nor do we believe that such subordination is designed by Providence, or that such uniformity is compatible with the present nature of man, or essential to his safety and peace. Believing that the Scriptures

contain the word of God, and that the natural faculties of man are its appropriate interpreters, we dare not commit to others the task of receiving a message which we know to be addressed immediately to ourselves; especially as we are convinced that, since the apostolic age, no peculiar gifts of wisdom or of tongues have been conferred on any man. The same Spirit which dictated the Gospel we believe to pervade the whole spiritual universe, giving wisdom liberally to all who seek it, and enlightening those who do the will of God respecting the doctrine which is of God.

Since the Roman Catholic Church cannot find a basis for its claims in the Scriptures, those claims must be founded on the 'apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions' which she requires her members 'most firmly to admit and embrace.' The question between the Catholic and Protestant Churches on this subject is,—what traditions are to be received and what rejected; for the one Church would be as unwilling to receive all that have been current, as the other to reject all that have been substantiated. It is evident, as the Protestant Church admits, that the Christians who were not converted by the Apostles themselves, and who

lived before the publication of the canonical Scriptures, could have had no other foundation for their faith than tradition; and on the same ground we establish our belief in the genuineness of the Scriptures; *i. e.*, we declare them canonical.

When we reject traditions therefore, it is not as traditions, but in proportion to their evidence. If they appear inconsistent with the sacred writings, incompatible with the convictions of reason, or disagreeing with the circumstances of the age, we feel that the balance of evidence is against them. If they be merely vague and inconsequential, and not contradictory to each other or to any known truth, we hold them loosely, without firm conviction and without positive disbelief. If they be, not only consistent with, but corroborative of ascertained truth, clear in the origin, and early and extensively held, our faith in them is willing and steadfast. Of the first class are those traditions which were pleaded before the second Council of Nice, A. D. 787, on behalf of the worship of images, which we reject on all the grounds mentioned above; viz. because they are inconsistent with the spirit and letter of the sacred books; because they are incompatible with the

convictions of our reason, and because they are perfectly irreconcileable with the practice of the Apostles and the discipline of the primitive Church. Of the second class are those which relate the various fate of the first followers of Christ, and which we admit in the absence of all other evidence, though on such slight grounds as to have no firm conviction of their truth. Of the third class are those by which we receive the sacred books as genuine, and which command belief from their universal prevalence, their strong inherent probability, and perfect consonance with the contents of the books themselves. It will be easily anticipated from what we have said, that we reject those traditions which corroborate the claims of the Roman Catholic Church to a special divine commission; since such traditions are in opposition to what we recognize as the spirit of the Gospel, and unsanctioned by the conduct of the Apostles, especially of Peter. Rejecting these traditions, we hold the opinion suggested by the record of the Acts of the Apostles, that their special commission expired with themselves; that apostolical ordination was a temporary institution; and that the special influence of

the Holy Spirit was designed to be a temporary sanction.

The church of England appears to us to merit the censure and even the ridicule cast upon her by the Roman Catholic Church for the inconsistency of her institutions with the principle on which she professes to act,—the principle of the Reformation,—that the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants. Catholics and protestants Dissenter join in challenging her to produce from the Bible the grounds of the practice, among others, of episcopal ordination; including, as it does, the declaration of the regular transmission of the office, with its peculiar gifts of the Spirit, from the times of St Peter till the present day. Rejecting, as she does, the ecclesiastical traditions on which the Catholics depend, and unable as she is to adduce authority from the Scriptures to which Dissenters appeal, she has no alternative but to own the practice ungrounded, or to adduce some third authority, hitherto unheard of.

Some of the most objectionable forms of ordination for Christian pastorship were, notwithstanding, retained by various denominations of Dissenters long after their separation

from the Church of England, and are still partially held; but Unitarians have altogether relinquished the conception that the teachers of the Gospel are peculiarly qualified for their office otherwise than by their voluntary devotion to it, and by those natural means of study, reflection and prayer which their duty requires them strenuously to employ.

We conceive that the Church of England has been led into the inconsistency mentioned above by conceiving in common with the Catholics, and as we think erroneously, that the institutions of Church government established in the apostolic age are a part of Christianity, and therefore destined to be permanent. Her Church government is, it is true, not the same,because it cannot, by possibility, be so, the lapse of ages having wrought unavoidable changes; but this mutability, which ought to prove to her the temporary nature of the institution, only makes her cling the more eagerly to the points of resemblance which she conceives to have been preserved between her own constitution and that of the primitive Church; forgetting that such supposed resemblance is immediately derived from that very Catholic Church whose superstitions inspired

her with so much horror at the Reformation. Whatever resemblance the two Churches bear to the primitive Church in its external offices, they bear in common.

This resemblance, however, is but slight. In the primitive Christian Church, regulated by elders chosen from the people, and in no way distinguished from them in rank or learning, and served by deacons, whose office was to distribute the funds held by all in common, we can scarcely recognize the original of the pompous establishments in which religion is now believed to be preserved in its purity, till, on examining the history, we trace the degrees by which spiritual domination was secured. The most distinguished of the elders served the office of moderator in the assemblies which met for the transaction of business. In time, the office became permanent, and the 'constant president' was allowed to appropriate the title of 'bishop,' which had before been common to all the elders. When numbers increased so that smaller congregations were separated from one larger, each colony had an elder at its head, and the chief of the parent Church became a diocesan bishop. Large country congregations were, however, empowered to

choose a complete set of officers for themselves, consisting of bishops, elders, and deacons, and were independent of the city Churches, till the Council held at Antioch A. D. 341 forbade country bishops to ordain priests or deacons, and allowed them the power of choosing only the inferior officers of the Church. The next step was to abolish the order of country bishops; *country deans* and *arch priests* being substituted. At length, synods were held, at which the bishops met as deputies of the people, to communicate concerning affairs of common interest, forgetting from time to time the character in which they appeared, and venturing to make decrees by their own authority, and even to claim a power of prescribing in matters of faith and discipline. The principal bishop in a large district was employed by his brethren to convoke these assemblies; and as the choice usually fell on the chief officer of the metropolitan Church, the title of metropolitan bishop or arch-bishop was applied to him; which term became common in the Church after the year 430. The patriarchs were of a higher rank still; and there were only five of them, belonging to the sees of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.

They were not called Primates till the time of Leo I. The ambition of the clergy found extensive means of gratification in the changes made by Constantine, who adapted the government of the Church to that of the State, which he had newly divided and ordered. As the superior clergy grasped at greater power, the inferior clergy pressed upon their steps; and we soon hear of arch-presbyters and arch-deacons, and of the occasional union of the offices of priest and deacon in the same individual. Thus did the servants gradually become the masters of the Church; and thus, in four centuries, was the constitution of Christian congregations so entirely changed, that scarcely a shadow of their original institutions remained.

This brief detail (the truth of which is so well known that it is needless to give as our authority every accredited ecclesiastical history) affords the best argument for the temporary nature of the institutions of Church government, and sanctions the declaration of those who are charged by either Church with schism, that before they can again be required to join the Establishment, that Establishment must be reduced to the simplicity of government and discipline which characterized the primitive

church. The bishops must assume nothing over their brethren, and be superior in no respect but in holiness; they must be stewards of God, not given to lucre, but eminent in faith, in temperance, in charity. The deacons must administer the common revenues of the church for the benefit of those who have need, appropriating nothing themselves nor suffering others to appropriate. The church itself must be, in all its views and objects, not of this world; having no respect of persons, not awarding to the man in goodly apparel a better place than to the poor man in vile raiment, rejecting every inducement to the usurpation of secular power, and leaving to the conscience of every man, as Peter referred to the conscience of Ananias, the obligation of contributing to the common revenue. 'While the land remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was not the price in thine own power?' is not the language of ecclesiastical tax-gatherers in the present day: and till all contributions to the churches become strictly voluntary, till the churches abjure all temporal authority, and free their discipline and ritual from the encroachments of spiritual tyranny and the defilements of superstition, neither the one nor the

other can advance any claim to spiritual allegiance, and men who dissent from both may hold themselves innocent of the sin of schism.

Thus much we say on the supposition that it might be possible or desirable to restore the ancient constitution of the Church. But we make such a supposition only for the sake of meeting the views of those who, feeling that the ecclesiastical establishments of the present day are unchristian, would fain substitute for them the simple institutions of the primitive Church. Believing as we do, that all such institutions must be classed among the non-essentials of Christianity, we would have them modified according to the circumstances of the age and country in which they are to be used. It is not possible that some of the original Christian ordinances can be advantageously employed in every country and through every age. The first Christians belonged, for the most part, to the middling and lower classes of society, and consequently had few possessions. These possessions, with whatever was voluntarily offered by the few rich men among them, were gathered into a common stock, in order that all might be so far freed from secular cares as to be able to devote their minds and hearts

to the furtherance of the cause of the Gospel. It is obvious that the same reasons for establishing a community of goods do not exist in a Christian country, where the faith has no longer to maintain a struggle with the powers which opposed its first promulgation. Nor could such a community of goods answer the same purposes in a wealthy commercial state and among the cantons of Switzerland, among the nobles and boors of Russia, and the backwoodsmen of America; in states where civilization is most advanced, and in regions where the rights of property are almost unrecognized.

The same may be said of the external modes of worship. Granting that the complex ceremonies of Roman Catholic worship, so nearly resembling the rites of Paganism, might, by possibility, admit of a connexion with pure Christian faith, it cannot be supposed that the cross, wax lights, and incense can ever form a ritual appropriate to the customs of Arabs or Indians, or that they will help the devotion of the fiftieth generation from the present. Primitive modes of worship have, by a singular ordering of circumstances, been preserved among the Vaudois, and are still consonant with their secular state: but men who dwell amidst ravines

and mountain forests think and feel differently, and therefore worship differently from those who inhabit the cities of the plain; while the faith of all is essentially the same. It is, therefore, unreasonable of the Catholic Church to require of all her members, dwell where they may, in the north or in the south, in the metropolis or the wilderness, the vow, 'I also receive and admit the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, received and approved in the solemn administration of all the seven sacraments.'

Far more reasonable is the Gospel in its requisitions, the sole condition of whose promises is, that men shall 'worship the Father in spirit and in truth.' We have said that the essence of Christian faith is the same through all varieties of manifestation. It has ever been so, and it shall ever be so, for these varieties of manifestation are ordained for the very purpose of preserving the essence. They are ordained, lest men, too much regarding things seen and temporal, should confound with them things unseen and eternal; should not only incorporate religion in material forms, but identify it with them. They are ordained that men may learn what Christianity really is, what the Lord God requires of them concerning it, what

He promises them in it, what He purposes to effect by it; and furthermore, that men may mutually recognize the new bond of brotherhood which the Gospel discloses, by which all are made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. This recognition must take place as soon as the nature and design of Christianity are understood, be it here or hereafter, in this world or in the next; and surely the sooner the better.

That mode of belief which encourages the closest investigation into the principles of Christianity; which discovers the most clearly all spiritual relations; which affords the most distinct apprehension of the permanence and universality of the Gospel; which discerns how its promises are ratified, its threatenings confirmed, its truths corroborated by all other spiritual influences, by all the results of human experience, and all the developments of Providence,—must be the best adapted to the needs and capabilities of an ever-expanding and immortal spirit. That mode of belief which adapts itself to all times and circumstances, and which is independent of all influences but those which are unfailing, must be the truest and best: and such a faith actually exists in those views of Chris-

tianity under which it appears as simple and diffusive as natural religion.

The Greenlander, who sees how rapidly all natural influences combine to enhance the bloom of his transient summer, recognizes the same attributes of Providence as the philosopher who marks the expansion of mind under the vicissitudes of events: both are natural religionists. The great truths of Christianity may be also common to both. The Greenlander loses the wife of his bosom, and wanders on the icy shore to watch if any skiff traverses the horizon, to bring him tidings from the world of spirits; he listens to the sullen roar of the waves and the moaning of the wind, in the intense hope that the voice of a spirit may mingle with their murmurs. The philosopher who has suffered bereavement feels a similar want, though his yearnings are differently expressed. His reason is adjured, and not his senses, to yield evidence of a life beyond the grave; and the intellect of the one is as intently fixed as the eye and ear of the other on whatever may bring a solution of his doubts. Is not the main fact of Christianity that which is preeminently fitted to afford consolation and hope to both? To each in the proportion in which he is able to

receive it? The Greenlander, who believes that there has been an actual resurrection in proof that all men shall live after death, is soothed and cheered by hope. He is brave when tossed by the storms of the ocean or half-buried in a snow-drift, because death is no longer the fearful thing it was. He is patient when his winter store of provisions is exhausted and his children ask him for food, because his faith teaches him that he who can restore the dead from the grave can preserve the living, though the means may not be immediately apparent. This faith is the same with that on which the philosopher reposes his trust, when he sees things that yet are not as though they were, —the revelations of the grave, the spiritual and intellectual communion of a higher state, and the blessed results of the trials and privations of the present. And a similar congeniality prevails respecting every other essential doctrine and principle of the Gospel; and even respecting its minor details. The universal spread of Glad Tidings is a fit subject for universal rejoicing. The moral beauty of the Saviour's character is recognizable by all; the spirit of his teachings is congenial to all; and the very illustrations in which they are set forth are of

a universal nature. Storms everywhere beat on human dwellings, and in all regions flowers spring, and the lights of heaven shine and are obscured. The filial and fraternal relations subsist everywhere; widowed mothers mourn over the bier of a son, and rejoicings are witnessed at marriage feasts. The parables of the Gospel are the most appropriate elementary teachings for all minds from pole to pole; and the principles which Christ proposed command the assent of every intellect, from that of the child whom he set in the midst of his followers, to that which, exalted by all holy influences, is surrounded on its release from the grave by a throng of perfected spirits. It is for man to beware how he limits what God has thus made universal; how he monopolizes what God designs to be diffused; how he encumbers by human inventions that truth which Divine wisdom has made free to all.

By the Gospel, a new relation is established between Him who gives and him who receives it; and it is for man to beware how he attempts to modify this relation, or to intrude on the special communion which it establishes. It is not in the power of man to take away any thing from the Gospel, though he may narrow the

capacity of its recipients; but he must beware how he adds to it the teachings of his own low and vain imaginations. He can do nothing to impair Divine truth, for it is made invulnerable by God: but he may impair and destroy its efficacy for himself and his brethren, by mistaking its nature and perverting its influences; by transferring to others the task which he may not delegate, of admitting its evidences and interpreting its commands. It is not in the power of man to silence the voice of God speaking on earth through Christ; but he must beware of listening to any other exponent of the Divine will, whether or not he refer his claim to St Peter; whether or not he appeal to human wisdom throned in the papal chair or attested by the unanimity of Councils; whether or not he entitle himself the Vicar of Christ on earth.

It is not in the power of man to restrict the influences of the Gospel. What they have been, they will be; what they have done, they will continue to effect. They will bless the spirit in its wanderings and in its retirements, making the universe the record of its history, and its inmost recesses the dwelling-place of Deity. They will restrain the excesses, chasten the emotions, and ennoble the sympathies of

humanity. They will bless life, and hallow the grave. They will develope themselves perpetually as ages roll on, till it shall be their lowest office to still the sighings and subdue the conflicts of the spirit; while their highest shall still be, so to direct its pursuit of ultimate objects, so to invigorate its natural and moral powers, as to evidence to itself its ever-growing resemblance to its Maker. It is for man to beware lest he exclude himself from these influences or impair their operation by mistaking superstition for religion, and by supinely relinquishing the intellectual and spiritual liberty with which Christ has made him free.

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